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CONFLICT AND ANGER IN WOMEN RELIGIOUS

A Dissertation Presented

by

JANET MALONE, CND

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

February 1991

School of Education

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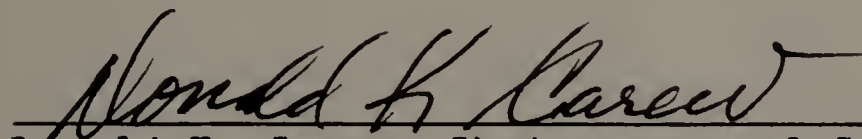
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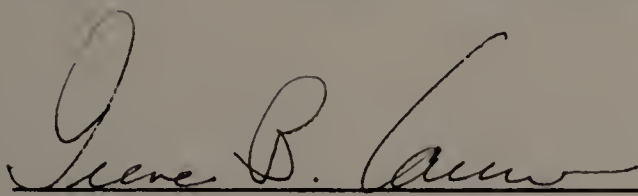
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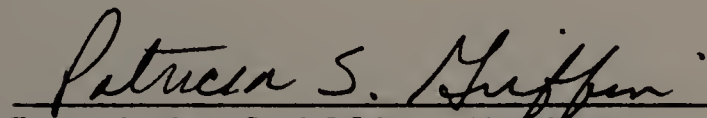
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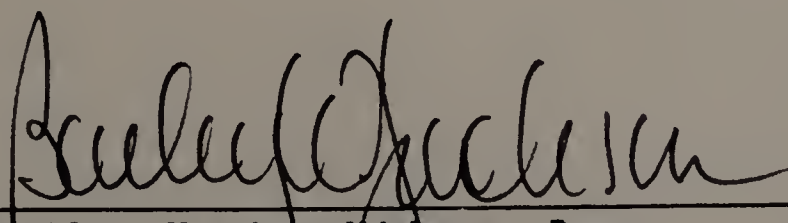
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In the spring of 1986 the provincial leadership in St. Joseph Province of the Congregation de Notre Dame requested that I return to school to do a doctorate. Now, having completed a master's degree in interpersonal communication and a doctorate in organization development, that request, and my "yes" to that request, have turned out to be gift in my life. I am truly grateful for the experience, a growth experience I probably would not have specifically chosen.

My dissertation committee gave me the space I needed to be creative and dream dreams, yet they kept me "on track". Rene Carew was there if I really needed her. Pat Griffin was a tremendous help in research design and methodology. Don Carew, as chairperson, was meticulous in his feedback, helping me crystallize my ideas. And we could laugh about it all, even when I was "_____ persistent"!

My sister Linda supported me throughout this whole process in her ongoing intuitive contacts, just when I needed them the most. Her love and care have truly sustained me along the way. Words can't express my own gratitude and love.

A number of people have been gift in my life during my time here at U-Mass. They include, among others, Eileen McNutt, James Hurley, Katja Hahn D'Errico, Steve Goldberg, Bob Howes, Jim Craig, Donna Mellen, Diane Goodman. They have loved me, respected me and challenged me. Each, in his/her own way has enriched my life. To them, and to my time here, I say "magnificat". To what is to come, I say "fiat".

ABSTRACT

CONFLICT AND ANGER IN WOMEN RELIGIOUS

FEBRUARY 1991

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The purpose of this qualitative research was to gain insight on how twenty-one women religious described and gave meaning to their experiences of conflict and anger within the cultural organization of the Congregation de Notre Dame (CND). The conflict and anger norms and taboos of the CND were named and analyzed to determine their effects on how the women religious in that organization handled conflict and expressed anger.

Applying the holistic-inductive principles of naturalistic inquiry, one audiotaped indepth interview of 60-90 minutes, using a focused interview guide, was carried out with these CND women religious, accessed

through purposeful sampling. The criterion for purposeful sampling in the data collection was based on information redundancy. Data reduction, management and analysis were carried out by means of the constant comparative method, in which categories, patterns and themes emerged from and were grounded in the data. In this process, extensive use was made of verbatim quotes from the participants' audiotaped interviews, through which they recounted and validated their personal experiences of conflict and anger within the CND.

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PROLOGUE

REBEL TO PROPHET: A TALE

Once upon a time a young woman
Heard about a special group
A group that worked to educate others
"E-ducere", to lead others forth.

Inspired by such a mission
She left her home, family, friends
And went off to join the group
Sad but joyful, full of youthful dreams, ideals.

Two years of indepth training
Training that spoke of "e-ducere", leading forth
But which felt like stultification...

Keeping the broader picture in mind
She hung in there
Becoming "one of them"
Ready to go forth...

Quickly, something happened to her
Life's vibrancy was ebbing from her
Try as she would
She didn't fit the mold, couldn't fit the mold
And live!
She had to be her own true, indepth person.

Becoming known as a rebel, not really "one of us"
She struggled. "Do I stay? Do I go?"
Recognizing life seeping from her
With "unity in conformity".

Then a crisis occurred in her life
Gift-time to evaluate...
Still young, still searching
Yet feeling committed to the ideals of the group

She decided to stay. A different person now
Or rather, committed to her own true person now
True to her own being,
She carried out the mission.

For years, recognized only as a rebel
Written off by some, ignored by most
But OK, deep within her own being.

Saying what had to be said
Doing what had to be done

She hung in there
 Caring and loving the group
 Despite at times, her loneliness and isolation...

And as things go, over time
 Changes, ever so minuscule
 Began occurring in the group.

She continues on in the group
 But these days, she has come home in some ways
 No longer viewed as a rebel
 Perhaps even "one of us"
 And at times, maybe even a prophet?
 Working at the goal: within and without.

My Story

As a member of the Congregation de Notre Dame, I have had to look at, and struggle with the effects of its cultural values, norms and taboos on me at the core of my being. I have constantly struggled with being true to who I am and who I am becoming, particularly in the areas of dealing with conflict and expressing my emotions, especially the negative emotion of anger. At the same time, I have struggled with being the nice, quiet, docile, peaceful CND as defined within the parameters of its cultural organizational norms and taboos of peace at all costs, obey authority, right or wrong, don't rock the boat, don't ruffle feathers.

Similar to the stories many of the research participants describe in vivid detail in this study, the effects of not handling conflict constructively, and overtly expressing my negative emotions, particularly anger, took a physical toll on me. Although I'm not

suggesting a direct cause-effect here in my own life, yet in hindsight, there was definitely a connection between the physical sickness and my attempting to be someone I was not.

The physical crisis I experienced, related to my not constructively dealing with conflict, has been, in hindsight, one of the biggest gifts I have had in my life. It became a definite turning point. I came to recognize that I had to be truly good to who I am, and am becoming, in the core of my being; I had to empower myself and be who I am called to be, despite the values, norms and taboos of the group I had joined. I came to appreciate the particular gifts I had in potential, gifts which could only be actualized if I became self empowered.

Self Empowerment. Self empowerment requires a lot of my best energies in an ongoing way. Doing otherwise would result in my using these best energies to become a caricature of who I am really called to be. As a member of the Congregation de Notre Dame (CND), this would mean that I would allow the oppressive conflict and anger values, norms and taboos of the organization dictate my own values, norms and taboos around such issues.

In the CND, I have seen many fine women who have given their lives, their gifts, their talents to the faith call of religious life. This vocation, lived out within

community, or more specifically communal life, seemed to be embittering a number of these women so that their best energies were not used for "e-ducere". Some were becoming dependent, giving over who they were at the core of their beings, to stultifying values, norms and taboos.

Part of my personal self empowering process was coming to grips with the real concern that I could also become dependent and cynical. This was part of my deciding whether I could remain in the group, making "final vows". I shared these concerns with my brother Ray, stating that I felt called in faith to be a religious, yet I feared for who I was at the core of my being within the CND. He simply replied, "Janet, you will always have to be yourself".

Through the many ups and downs of growing to be the best true self I can be within my faith call, as lived out in the CND, I have had to make choices that made me feel different and isolated from the group. I knew I had to do this, despite the loneliness and pain of being the "rebel".

My Story: Catalyst for Present Research. My own story of dealing with conflict and anger within the CND has been the catalyst for wanting to share with women religious the necessity of naming the values, norms and taboos around conflict and anger in their cultural

organizations as a first step to effecting change. I have come to realize that many others in religious life have also been adversely affected by oppressive values, norms and taboos.

Part of the self empowering process is being able to name what oppresses us. When the four basic human needs are not met in organizations, problems result. These needs are 1) need for meaning, 2) need for a certain amount of control, 3) need for positive reinforcement to be autonomous and think for oneself, 4) the degrees to which one's actions and behaviors shape attitudes and beliefs of one's organization rather than vice versa (Peters and Waterman, 1982). My personal story then is the catalyst for the present research.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

I am a Roman Catholic woman religious of the Congregation de Notre Dame (CND). I am often asked different questions about my lifestyle as a woman religious in the Roman Catholic Church: why people live such a lifestyle, what are the components of the lifestyle, and how people in this particular lifestyle find fulfillment. In any discussion which follows such queries, inevitably the stereotypes about religious life come up. These include for example, how fulfilling it must be on one level, living a lifestyle which is often described as "a life of perfection".

The purpose of this study flows from my personal experience of religious life and my ongoing efforts to grow and become self actualized within such a lifestyle. My own personal struggles, as a woman religious, with both conflict and anger in dyadic and group contexts within the CND have been at one and the same time very painful and yet growth producing experiences. Part of the personal pain has been due to the norms and taboos I think exist in religious life surrounding the acceptance and expression of conflict and anger. A critical incident, early in my religious life, brought home to me the great necessity of

recognizing and dealing with my conflict and anger in constructive and health producing ways. This study hopes to initiate a more open discussion of conflict and anger within religious life generally, and my own CND community specifically. When conflict and anger are recognized and dealt with in overt and constructive ways, they can be vital growth opportunities. When they are repressed or suppressed, physical, psychological and spiritual problems can ensue.

Roman Catholic Religious Life

At this point, some pertinent information about religious life is given in order to enhance a more indepth discussion of this research.

Essentially, Roman Catholic religious life is a lifestyle where people come together through a faith call to live a vowed life, in the context of community life which is, by and large, a communal style of life. There are different types of religious communities both of men and women, founded at different periods in history for different purposes (Greeley, 1972; McGrath, 1972). For example, some religious communities are monastic communities where the main goal is that of constant prayer for the needs of Church and society. Other communities, like the CND, are apostolic communities. Such communities were founded to carry out a particular apostolate such as

teaching, nursing or social work, but within a community, i.e. communal and vowed lifestyle.

I think it is important to keep in mind that religious life, no matter the type, is a personal response to a faith call where an individual, in responding to such a call, recognizes the covenant notion of a Divine call and a human response. In other words, a call or vocation to the religious life, to be appropriately understood, must be contextualized within the theological parameters of the Christian and herein, the Catholic Church, and the faith dimensions of a Divine call.

Women responding to such a call however, bring to such a lifestyle, the sex role stereotyping and socialization of their familial, societal and cultural upbringings. It has been well documented in the literature that women have been especially socialized to be caring, nurturing, and sensitive to the needs of others to the detriment at times, of caring for and nurturing themselves (Belenky et al. 1986; Bem and Bem, 1976; Bernardez, 1988; Clance and O'Toole, 1988; Ferguson, 1988; Gilligan, 1982; Hall, 1979; Josselson, 1987; McKay, 1979; Miller, 1976, 1983; Orbach and Eichenbaum, 1987; Osiek, 1986; Schaef, 1981; Sheehy, 1976; Tavris, 1982).

Vatican Council II and Religious Life. Vatican Council II, the twenty-first council in the Roman Catholic

Church was initiated by Pope John XXIII. The objectives of this council, summarized in the Pope's letter, *Ad Petri Cathedram*, of June 29, 1959, included the development of the Catholic faith, the renewal of Christian and religious life and the adaptation of ecclesiastical legislation to modern requirements (Jaeger, 1961).

The government of many communities of women religious, at least up until Vatican II, was that of a hierarchical system, with a Superior General and a General Council at the apex, Provincial Superiors and their Councils, responsible for the government of certain geographical regions of the community (provinces), local superiors and their councils responsible for the government of local communities within the provinces and finally, the members at the bottom of the pyramid. This form of government has been the history of the CND community.

Since Vatican II, orders of women religious have attempted to change these hierarchical structures to a more collaborative and mutual form of government, following the Council's decree on the renewal of religious life, "Perfectae Caritatis" (Flannery, 1975). Some religious communities of women have been quite successful in their efforts of moving from a hierarchical form of government, pyramidal in nature, to a more democratic form

of government, more circular in nature, denoting its collaborative stance.

The Congregation de Notre Dame

The Congregation de Notre Dame, (CND), the Roman Catholic religious community of women, of which I am a member, is "an institute of consecrated life of pontifical right within the Church." (CND Constitutions and Rules, 1984, p. 13). It was founded in the seventeenth century by Marguerite Bourgeoys, in present day Montreal, Canada, but at that time Ville Marie, a burgeoning colony in North America. The goal of the CND community is that of education, education in both its strict and broad senses. Today, as an international community of approximately 2500 women, such a goal is carried out in many and varied ways by women religious living a vowed life of poverty, chastity and obedience and community life in which all things are held in common.

In 1653, Marguerite Bourgeoys brought together "a group of women who would honour the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary as the exemplar of the feminine apostolic life ... in a commitment to education" (CND Constitutions and Rules, 1984, pp. 13-14).

The Roman Catholic Church Government. In looking at the structure of the CND, it is necessary to contextualize

such a structure within the larger context of the Catholic Church.

At the macro level of the Church, there is the hierarchical and patriarchal pyramid, with the Pope at the apex, and the bishops, priests and deacons below him. Together they govern ("shepherd") the Church. "The government of the Catholic Church (is) a body of bishops who in their collective capacity share the authority of the Apostles under the primacy of Peter. Each bishop wields a large amount of autonomous authority in his own diocese; a line of command rises above bishops to the Bishop of Rome, the Vicar of Christ" (Lynskey, 1952, p. 39). The Catholic Church is not seen as a democracy (Lombardi, 1967), but as a hierarchy with a patriarchal, feudal-like system of male supremacy based seemingly, on Christ and his twelve apostles being male. Christ chose twelve apostles and gave them the mission of preaching God's kingdom. The apostles, therefore, as the first rulers of the early Christian Church, took care to appoint men to succeed them to carry on and complete what they had begun. And these men appointed other men to succeed them (Greeley, 1972; Greeley and Durkin, 1984; Jaeger, 1961; Lombardi, 1967; Lynskey, 1952; McGrath, 1972).

At the micro level, religious life comes under the purview of the larger hierarchical, patriarchal governmental structures of the Catholic Church. Canonical

religious orders, in order to be recognized officially as such, by the Catholic Church, must have their constitutions (rules and way of life) ratified by Rome. Included in a religious community's constitutions are the community's governmental structure, its "raison d'être" and its mission statement (its charism and goals), its vowed life, its prayer life and formation of members (new and ongoing).

CND Government. The CND, still with its hierarchical structures, has taken minuscule steps toward a more collaborative type of government since Vatican Council II and the renewal of religious life. At present, the Superior General and her Administrative Council along with the Provincial and Regional Superiors and their Councils and the Local Superiors and their Councils, govern the international CND, consisting of 11 provinces and approximately 210 local communities, for a total membership of some 2500.

Within each province there are a number of local communities, each with its own local superior and first councillor. They are in essence, responsible for the running of the local community, but report to the Provincial Superior, who in turn, is responsible to the Superior General. For each of these offices, there is a

combination of member selection for prospective leaders, followed by an election or appointment process.

The foregoing information on the CND has been deemed necessary as a contextualizing framework within which to better focus the parameters of this research. Next, the particular purpose of this study is addressed in more detail.

Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study are twofold, based on the following research questions: 1) How do women religious within the CND describe and give meaning to their experiences of interpersonal conflict specifically within that context? 2) How do women religious within the CND describe and give meaning to the emotions they experience, particularly that of anger, within such conflictual situations? The focus of this study is to understand how women religious, living a vowed, communal lifestyle deal with interpersonal conflict and concomitant emotions, particularly that of anger. This research aims to systematically highlight the description and meaning women religious of the Congregation de Notre Dame give to such experiences within the interpersonal dynamics of a communal lifestyle. No effort is made herein to look at how these women handle conflict in situations outside the

CND; the focus is specifically on the cultural organization of the CND and its norms and taboos regarding conflict.

Particular attention is also given to how these women recount and give meaning to the emotions experienced within such conflictual situations, particularly the emotion of anger, since "anger seems to be a special problem for religious" (Hammett and Sofield, 1981, pp. 94-95). Hammett, a female religious, and Sofield, a male religious, have concluded that anger is especially difficult for religious, based on their individual experiences in religious life and their professional experiences of working with both male and female religious groups.

As a member of the Congregation de Notre Dame, (CND), I have a real passion to look inward at my community in order to recognize, name and change, where needed, the CND cultural organization's norms and taboos regarding conflict and anger which can interfere, with the essence of true physical, spiritual and psychological growth (Bernardez, 1988; Cavanagh, 1985; Coser, 1956; Crum, 1987; Ferder, 1986; Gill and Armadeo, 1980; Hammett and Sofield, 1981; Miller, 1983; Sofield and Julianio, 1987; Wicks, 1984).

I have lived within the communal vowed lifestyle of the CND for several years. It is within this context that

I have given meaning to my own personal ongoing experience of how I handle conflict and deal with my anger both intrapersonally and interpersonally. Such intrapersonal awareness has helped, and is helping me become more proactive, self empowered and healthy in my interpersonal dynamics involving conflict and anger. It is this ongoing experience which has set the stage for my undertaking to discover, in a systematic way, how other women religious in my community describe and interpret their personal growth experiences involving conflict and anger.

Interpersonal Conflict and Anger

Although conflict and anger could be studied from a number of perspectives, including the intrapersonal, and the interpersonal (Woodward, 1987), for purposes of this study, conflict and anger will be studied primarily within the interpersonal perspective because I want to look at how the norms and taboos regarding conflict and anger, within such a communal lifestyle, affect CNDs' constructive handling of conflict and expression of anger.

It is understood that there is a definite amount of overlap among the different contexts in which conflict and anger can occur. For example, how I deal with my own intrapersonal conflict and anger impinges upon my interpersonal conflict and ensuing emotions. The primary focus of this study, however, is on interpersonal conflict

and anger as experienced within the exigencies of a communal lifestyle. Within every group there are particular values, particular behavior norms and taboos. The CND is no different.

Personal Experience of Conflict and Anger. From my personal experience within the CND, the meaning I have given to the basic norms and taboos regarding conflict and anger is that a "faithful" and prayerful" religious is never in conflict and doesn't experience anger. Such norms and taboos may be changing somewhat, at least in certain contexts, yet in my early and more formative years within the CND, I personally had to come to grips with my interpersonal conflicts and experiences of anger within such norms and taboos.

A critical incident early in my religious life changed and continues to change my attitudes and behaviors regarding conflict and anger. As a religious, living the life of perfection, I had attempted to take on the norms and taboos of the CND that one is always nice, never in conflict with another and never angry. In hindsight, I saw that in not dealing with interpersonal conflicts and my concomitant anger in constructive ways with the people concerned, I turned it inward. I think that the physical breakdown of my body was due, at least in part, to my suppression of conflict and anger in my life. Eventually

my body could take no more conflict and anger turned inward, and it reacted.

Because there is likely to be suppression or perhaps even repression of conflict and anger within religious life, (this is not to discount the same thing happening in other group contexts, but the context I am particularly interested in is that of religious life), I think it is vital for women religious to learn more about the healthy and positive aspects of both. This research is hopefully a beginning step in that process, the beginning step of naming the norms and taboos within the CND that impede rather than enhance the constructive handling of conflict and expression of anger.

It is my strong bias, based on personal experience, that conflict and anger just don't go away; each has to be dealt with in a constructive manner if one wants to remain healthy physically, psychologically and spiritually. In this research I highlight the stories of how other CND women religious narrate and evaluate their experiences of conflict and anger.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this proposed study is threefold. First, there is a definite lacuna in the literature about conflict and anger in religious life. This study is a beginning attempt to redress the situation. I think this

lacuna in the literature is aggravated for women religious. As women, they bear the burden of familial, societal and cultural norms and taboos related to conflict and anger in females. As women religious, these burdens are exacerbated with maxims of perfection and religious norms and taboos regarding conflict and anger. This research provides an opportunity for such issues to be brought into the open by empowering women religious within the CND to tell their stories.

Second, the data analysis in this qualitative naturalistic inquiry is a means to enhance the self-knowledge and self-esteem of women religious research participants in the Congregation de Notre Dame, through this first step of naming what is oppressive to them and their constructive and healthy handling of conflict and anger.

Third, the data gathered in this indepth interviewing of women religious about conflict and anger, within a communal or group lifestyle context, may have application for other groups and organizations.

Definition of Terms

A number of terms are used frequently throughout this research including women religious, conflict, anger, culture, organization, norms, taboos, repression, suppression, and self-esteem. The first three mentioned

are defined here at the outset because of frequency of use, but also to set the parameters within which they are operationalized in the study. The other terms are defined as they occur in the research.

Women Religious. Women religious is a term defined for clarification purposes because such a term may not be a familiar term to everyone. In this study, I have chosen primarily to refer to women living a vowed, communal lifestyle as women religious because I think it most clearly connotes the essence of who such women are.

There are a number of ways to refer to women living religious life, including religious, women religious, sisters, nuns and religious women. Sisters could have been used, since it is a term used to designate women living apostolic religious life. This term however, is used interchangeably and confusedly with nuns, a term which essentially refers to cloistered religious, who usually take a vow of stability (a vow which binds the person to remain for life, in the foundation he/she enters). Because of the confusion I decided to refrain from using either term. Since many women are religious, that is they are prayerful, holy women, but may not live a vowed religious lifestyle, this term was not chosen. Finally, religious used by itself can refer to either males or females. To ensure clarity, I chose not to use

this term as the main designation but rather women religious.

Conflict. In this study, conflict is seen as something normal and natural, neither positive nor negative in itself. Conflict refers to the behavioral consequences of differences which arise because of diversity in values, goals, beliefs, needs, wishes, desires. From this perspective then, it is assumed that conflict will always exist. If conflict rarely or never occurs, its absence may mean repression or suppression. Conflict, although seen by many as negative and destructive, can also be positive and growth producing, despite the pain involved. In order for interpersonal conflict to be growth producing and positive, I think it must be managed in such a way that both people feel respected. Finally, conflict management is a skill which can be learned, thus alleviating some of the negative notions about it. It is understood herein, that it has great potential for growth, understanding and tolerance when it is recognized, accepted and handled constructively.

Anger. Anger is the psychophysiological emotion which occurs in humans when there has been a perceived

physical, psychological or spiritual hurt or frustration, when there has been a perceived personal or social injustice. It is a signal that something is awry. The tip of the iceberg, so to speak, it happens primarily when people perceive their being threatened, when their needs are not being met or when expectations are unfulfilled. Anger results from injustice and oppression. Herein, it is seen as a secondary emotion and to get to its roots, one can ask oneself, "If I were not feeling angry right now, what would I be feeling?"

Like conflict, anger is viewed negatively by many because it is mistakenly associated with aggression, hostility, and being out of control. Anger is commonly included among the negative emotions including impatience, sadness and rage; as such it is not as readily accepted as the positive emotions of peace, joy and happiness. Anger in this research is viewed as having tremendous potential when it is recognized, accepted and expressed in constructive and healthy ways. It can be growth producing and a catalyst for eliminating injustice and oppression.

Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the reasons and purposes for conducting this qualitative naturalistic inquiry. My personal experience with conflict and anger

within the CND was the primary reason for doing this study.

I have discussed the two purposes of the study and I have delineated the significance of this study regarding women religious' experiences of conflict and anger as being threefold: 1) a beginning in redressing the dearth in the literature on conflict and anger in the lives of women religious; 2) exploring the potential growth effects of individuals naming a group's conflict and anger norms and taboos; 3) suggesting application of the findings for other groups with strong conflict and anger norms and taboos in their cultural organizations.

Chapter II reviews three bodies of literature specific to this investigation, namely conflict, anger and cultural organization. Following an overview from the appropriate body of literature, I discuss each concept as it relates to women generally, and women religious specifically. I point out how familial, societal, cultural and religious norms and taboos related to conflict and anger have affected women religious.

Chapter III gives the rationale for and explication of the methodology which is used in this naturalistic, inductive qualitative research. It includes an overview of the qualitative research design and indepth interviewing methodology. Other research design aspects discussed in Chapter III include purposeful sampling of

interviewees, access, my role as researcher in the study, data collection, management, reduction, and analysis techniques and trustworthiness of the study.

Chapter IV analyzes the data obtained from the indepth interviews of 21 women religious of the CND within the Americas. Using verbatim quotations of the interviewees, this chapter, with rich iterative descriptions, highlights the lived experiences of 21 CNDs' handling of conflict and expressing anger within the cultural norms and taboos of the organization. Such norms and taboos are incisively detailed by the interviewees. The causes of interpersonal conflict and anger within the communal lifestyle are focused. Interviewees share the meaning of conflict and anger in their lives. They also emphasize the physical, psychological and spiritual effects on CNDs when conflict and anger are repressed and/or suppressed. Four additional themes which emerged from the data are discussed.

Chapter V summarizes the data of this research within the parameters of the two research questions. Pertinent conclusions are drawn. Questions are posed vis a vis the conclusions and one recommendation is made.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purposes of this qualitative study are to systematically highlight the description and meaning CND women religious give to their experiences of interpersonal conflict and anger within the norms and taboos of their communal lifestyle, the cultural organization of the Congregation de Notre Dame (CND).

Three bodies of literature are examined in this chapter. Section One of this chapter deals with conflict, Section Two, with anger and Section Three, with the characteristics of a cultural organization, including a discussion of cultural values, norms and taboos.

Women religious of the Congregation de Notre Dame live a communal lifestyle in which there is ample opportunity for interpersonal conflict and concomitant emotions, particularly that of anger. Conflict is defined and examined from several perspectives. It is highlighted as a stage of group development, given the lifestyle of women religious in the CND is essentially group living, where the group is both a task and social-emotional group. It is also looked at within the parameters of dyadic conflict. The conflict cycle, in its different stages, is

detailed. Finally, women and conflict, and specifically, women religious and conflict are examined.

Anger is defined and framed within the context of the extant literature on emotions, with emphasis on determining its possible causes, sources, functions, and response patterns. The discussion on anger also focuses on women and anger and in particular, women religious and anger.

On examining the characteristics of an organization with its management structures, as well as its purposes and mission statement, and interfacing these characteristics with some of the main characteristics of a culture, including its values, norms and taboos, the Congregation de Notre Dame is delineated as a cultural organization in this study. It provides the focal lens through which conflict and anger are viewed.

Section One: Conflict

Introduction

The plethora of research on conflict demonstrates that the topic has been studied from the perspective of many disciplines and traditions, each with its own set of assumptions. Such assumptions determine how conflict is viewed, its definitions, the role of the principals

involved, its functions, and essentially, how it is handled. As Mack and Snyder (1973) note, "Obviously 'conflict' is for the most part a rubber concept, being stretched and molded for the purposes at hand. In its broadest sense it seems to cover everything from war to choices between ice-cream sodas or sundaes" (p. 26).

Benne (1982) in his discussion about the significance of human conflict, succinctly summarizes the three most probable connotations or definitions of the concept: negative, positive, and neutral. He hastens to add that a large majority of connotations regarding conflict tend to be negative. Agreeing that it can be negative, depending on how it is handled, he goes on to point out "it is also potentially a good thing--the motor of individual growth and social progress" (p. 58).

Bercovitch (1984) and Woodward (1987) reiterate well the different opinions about conflict. Bercovitch says, "Conflict as such is neither good nor bad. When dealt with appropriately, it may lead to progress and creation; when dealt with inappropriately, it may lead to violence and destruction" (p. xi). Woodward says it this way, "It is clear that conflict may be either constructive or destructive. Either we create possibilities for growth or we limit them for one another" (p. 149).

Negative Definitions of Conflict

In highlighting several definitions of conflict, the focal point of interest is that conflict is a term with different meanings depending on the user (Nye, 1973). A major feature noted in the literature on conflict is that it may be viewed either positively or negatively.

Boulding (1962, p. 306), has pointed out, "Even though we may admit that some conflict is good, the word itself has a bias toward the bad". He adds that conflict is usually viewed from what we don't get rather than from what we get. "Conflict is discord and the opposite of conflict is harmony; the words reveal the evaluational bias in the language and in the common experience" (p. 307).

Bercovitch (1984), noting the range of definitions on conflict says, "Etymologically the word conflict is derived from the Latin word confligere, where it means to strike together..." (p. 17). Elsewhere he states, "In everyday language, conflict denotes overt, coercive actions in which two or more parties seek to impose their will on one another" (p. 3). One sees in this definition of conflict a win/lose game in which competition and power are givens.

Nye's definition of conflict as "mutual hostility between or among individuals or groups" (1973, p. xii) can

be considered negative because of its effects on the people concerned.

Conflict viewed negatively has also been defined as "deviant behavior which is seen as disease in need of treatment" (Coser, 1956, pp. 22-23).

Other definitions of conflict along these same lines, include conflict defined as opposition (Beals and Siegel, 1966); incompatible goals and interference from others in achieving these goals (Deutsch, 1973; Folger and Poole, 1981; Kriesberg, 1973); misunderstanding (Rex, 1981).

Positive Definitions of Conflict

Addressing the common misconceptions about conflict as "frightening and evil", Miller (1976, p. 125) emphasizes how such connotations obscure the reality that "conflict is inevitable, the source of growth, and an absolute necessity if one is to be alive" (p. 125).

Looking at conflict from a different perspective, it can be seen as natural, inevitable and growth producing. In his book, The Magic of Conflict, Crum proposes, "Conflict is natural; neither positive nor negative, it just is" (1984, p. 49). Elaborating on this notion of conflict, Crum adds that it is neither good nor bad. "When dealt with appropriately, it may lead to progress and creation; when dealt with inappropriately, it may lead to violence and destruction" (p. xi).

Cobb and Dapice (1987) elucidate the largely ignored, but powerful work Mary Parker Follett of Massachusetts did on conflict in the nineteenth century. They describe her perspective, noting, "Revolting against sentimental ethics which condemns all conflict as bad . . . , Follett offered an alternative. . . . Conflict is not unhealthy; it is a normal outcome of the human social condition" (p. 98; p. 100).

Deetz and Stevenson (1986) counter the most prevalent assumptions about conflict as unnatural and aberrant behavior, which should be avoided at all costs, with the assumptions that conflict is natural, inevitable, good, and necessary in interpersonal relationships. Given their own assumptions, they emphasize conflict management, adding, "Conflicts are considered bad because they are frequently mismanaged" (pp. 205-206).

Coser (1956) redresses the lacuna in the literature on the functions of conflict, as opposed to its dysfunctions, in his book, The Functions of Social Conflict. Among the sixteen functions discussed, included is the necessity of conflict to establish and maintain relationships, group identity and boundaries where there can be new growth and acceptance. Scherer et al. (1975), in their book, Human Aggression and Conflict, elaborate on Coser's functions of conflict, adding the insight that

"many small conflicts can forestall one larger destructive one" (p. 285).

Summary. Essentially the foregoing definitions of conflict are on a continuum from the one extreme of conflict as negative to the other of it being positive, to a balance somewhere between the two. The underlying assumptions, when negatively defined, are that conflict is always destructive, a zero-sum game. A scarcity of wealth, status, power, and esteem results in competition, coercion, force and violence with final outcomes of right and wrong, winners and losers.

When conflict is viewed positively, on the other hand, then there is a whole different process and dynamic at work. It becomes a situation where there is respect for differences, with cooperation and mutuality in a win-win situation.

The reality of conflict, for most people, is probably somewhere in between the two polarities described above. Because of familial, social, and religious enculturation about conflict, many people appear to be ambivalent toward conflict. Women, and in particular women religious, may see conflict as negative, bad, unhealthy, unfeminine, unreligious, and being out of control.

Conflict and Group Development

Interpersonal conflict is one of the stages of group development. For this reason the stages of group development are overviewed here. Interpersonal conflict occurs within this larger group context as well as in dyads.

There are many theories on the stages of group development, including those of Bennis and Shepard (1976), Hammett and Sofield (1981), Lacoursiere (1980), Schutz (1971), and Tuckman (1965).

Schutz' stages of inclusion, control and affection, Tuckman's stages of forming, storming, norming and performing, and Lacoursiere's stages of orientation, dissatisfaction, resolution, production and termination do have some commonalities. These stages are overviewed.

Orientation/Forming/Inclusion. Initially in the life of any group, people are orienting to the others with whom they'll be involved, either on task and/or social-emotional issues. Forming in the group occurs as people look for inclusion in the system. Things are somewhat superficial at this stage and people, although eager, can also be somewhat anxious and reserved. "The goal for the individual is to establish safe patterns for interaction" (Weber, 1982, p. 68).

Dissatisfaction/Storming/Control. The next stage in the life of a group is that of dissatisfaction, storming

or conflict. Here the dissatisfaction builds as parties become aware of incompatibilities around such group issues as control, power, leadership and goals. There can be negative reactions at this point to the formal leader or to other members (Carew et al., 1984). A triggering event in the group pushes the group to look at their behaviors and the consequences of these. Conflict may escalate at this point with either covert behaviors or direct confrontation.

Resolution/Norming. "Resolution of the dissatisfaction depends partly on redefining goals and tasks so that they are achievable" (Carew et al., 1984, p. 2). Although conflict and its management or resolution ordinarily constitute only a small part of the group's history, yet it is here that many groups get stuck and become uncohesive and unproductive. From this vantage point, I consider it the crux of any group's development. It is here that underlying assumptions, socializations and enculturations about conflict come to the fore and affect how the conflict is actually played out. A lack of knowledge or understanding of the stages of conflict can thwart the process.

If the management of the conflict is perceived by the group as the sole responsibility of the leader, rather than as one shared by all group members, then the conflict may be suppressed, controlled or curtailed by the leader

in contrast to its being directly handled by the whole group. It is essential to point out that if the group tries to avoid or suppress this stage, it will experience failure and unproductivity. The group remains stuck in this stage, returning to it again and again, until the process is completed (Carew et al., 1984; Lacoursiere, 1980; Weber, 1982).

Production/Performing/Intimacy. Following conflict management or resolution, the group then moves on to production, performing, and intimacy. System cohesiveness and trust are developed as group members work together toward a common goal. "Functional relationships are explored and established in spite of differences.... Interpersonally, members are now working out of affection or a caring about others in a deeper, less superficial manner than before" (Weber, 1982, p. 70).

Termination. The final stage of a group's life together is that of termination where the group members recognize, accept and in some way ritualize the termination of the group in its present form. Many times this stage is omitted with negative ramifications for the beginning stages of a new group. The group terminates in its present form when one person moves in or out of the group; it then becomes a new group, beginning the group stages anew. The old adage that people who can't say

good-bye, can't say hello is the sad story of the life history of many groups.

Summary. The foregoing discussion of the stages of group development, of which conflict is one, occur again and again in the life history of any group. The advantage of the recurrence of the stages is that a group can intentionally get better at recognizing them, and constructively working through them, perhaps in less time and with less pain. These stages are summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1: STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

TUCKMAN (1965)	SCHUTZ (1971)	LACOURSIERE (1980)
1. forming	1. inclusion	1. orientation
2. storming	2. control	2. dissatisfaction
3. norming	3. affection	3. resolution
4. performing		4. production
		5. termination

Dyadic Conflict

Conflict is no less a reality in dyadic relationships than it is as a stage in group development. The actual handling of dyadic conflicts may be different because the group's conflict norms and taboos aren't as much to the fore. Having said this, it is also important to note that if such dyadic conflicts occur within the cultural

organization of which the principals are members, then such norms and taboos may very well pervade and influence their personal ways of being (ontology), knowing (epistemology), and acting, particularly if such norms and taboos are unconsciously accepted. In addition, each person's familial, social and religious enculturation regarding conflict may also be operating, with varying degrees of covert and overt conflictual attitudes and behaviors displayed.

Conflict Cycle

Having looked at interpersonal conflict within dyadic as well as group development contexts, it is informative to look at how a conflict evolves. No matter the discipline, definition and underlying assumptions regarding conflict, there is a consistency in the research about applying certain constructs to better understand its evolution. It has been described as a cycle of "initiation-response-counter response" (Folger and Poole, 1984, p. 8), in which "from one cycle to the next the issues or the form of the manifest conflict will typically undergo change" (Walton, 1969, p. 73). The literature notes the following sequence: 1) latent conflict, 2) consciousness of opposition, 3) triggering events and 4) acknowledged conflict (Folger and Poole, 1984), or put

another way, 1) awareness, 2) escalation, 3) de-escalation, and 4) termination (Kriesberg, 1973).

There are commonalities then, in the foregoing models of conflict. First, there would appear to be a point in the evolution of conflict where there is an awareness and recognition of interpersonal differences along any number of parameters by the people involved.

Second, this incompatibility may be denied, suppressed, or controlled for a time, but there would appear to be a triggering event which brings the principals into some kind of covert or overt tension as displayed by particular behaviors and emotions.

Next, there can be a heightening of the interaction process in an escalation of the conflict, which can take the form of destructive or constructive conflict, depending on a myriad of factors, including biases, assumptions, power, control, personal centeredness of the people involved and their respect and acceptance of pluralism and differences in others, when incompatible with their goals, needs, and desires.

Fourth, conflict does run its course eventually, terminating negatively through coercion, force, avoidance or competition, or more positively through compromise, collaboration, accommodation, or integration. From such conflict termination, comes the cyclical beginnings of

other conflicts. The conflict cycle is summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2: CONFLICT CYCLE

CONFLICT CYCLE: initiation--response--counter-response

FOLGER & POOLE (1984)

KRIESBERG (1973)

1. latent conflict

2. conscious of opposition

1. awareness of conflict

3. triggering events

2. escalation

4. acknowledged conflict

3. de-escalation

4. termination

CONFLICT: conceived/born--flourishes--dies (BOULDING)

Boulding (1962), succinctly summarizes the evolution of conflict with the following: "Each particular conflict...can be thought of as having a life cycle: it is conceived and born, it flourishes for a while and then certain processes that are probably inherent in its own dramatic system eventually bring it to an end" (p. 307).

Women Religious and Conflict

In an effort to highlight the literature on women and conflict, and more specifically women religious and conflict, I conducted a literature search, using Silver Platter. (The focus of this particular study is women religious, but in no way does it preclude or downplay

similar problems that women in society at large have.) First, there were thousands of entries on conflict, many entries on women, three entries on women, conflict and interpersonal interaction, all of which dealt with male-female conflictual interactions, and finally, there were no entries on women religious and conflict, even with interchangeable terms.

The work of Flaherty (1987), The Effects of Gender on Perceptions of Conflict Management Behavior, does highlight how women have been socialized vis a vis conflict management, noting in particular that "women's interactions with others are guided by an 'ethic of care, the tie between relationship and responsibility'" (p. 105). Flaherty's study, with its focus on women in the workforce and management positions does bring to the fore women's socialization regarding such issues. It does not address however, the particular focus of this study: women religious and conflict in dyadic and group contexts.

The startling fact about the lacuna in the literature about women religious and conflict corroborated, in a sense, my own lived experience as a woman religious, namely, we have great difficulty admitting to and dealing with conflict. As such, it is not talked about or written about to any great extent.

It is important however, to point out yet again, that women who become religious bring to that particular group

their familial and social enculturations regarding conflict as well as the many other values and attitudes which make up their particular world views. As such, then, I think that the religious enculturation many of us received served only to reinforce and solidify previous norms and values about conflict. Hammett and Sofield (1981), both religious, who have experience working with both male and female religious communities, have addressed this issue of conflict in such communities, noting, "Conflict is an extremely difficult issue for most people living in community" (p. 17).

Conflict in a religious community is as inevitable as anywhere else. Because there are bound to be interpersonal differences, conflict will occur. What happens with the conflict depends on how it is viewed. As I mentioned in Chapter I, I think there has been, in the past (in the formative years of many women religious) more so than at present in some religious communities, but not excluding the present, unspoken, yet very real conflict norms and taboos that a "good" and "prayerful" religious will keep the peace, not ruffle feathers, not rock the boat and generally, not experience conflict (or anger for that matter).

Drawing on their personal experiences in religious life and their years of working with groups of men and women religious, Sofield and Juliano (1987), in their

book, Collaborative Ministry, speak of the inevitability of conflict, humorously adding, "Somewhere in history, a myth developed exempting religious people from the universal human phenomenon called conflict" (p. 102).

Effects of Not Handling Conflict

When conflict is not recognized and dealt with, then it is possibly repressed or suppressed. If this is the case in communities of women religious, then what are the repercussions both interpersonally and communally?

Interpersonally, unhealthy ways of dealing with conflict can include refusing to see what is happening, avoiding the conflict by going to one's room, appealing to authority to take care of the conflict, asking for a change in residence or suggesting the other sister be moved, using pious language to somehow make the conflict disappear (Woodward, 1987).

Unhealthy ways of dealing with communal or group conflict could include physical avoidance of the conflict by absenting oneself from group situations, or psychological avoidance through passivism and reticence in group situations. Other unhealthy ways of dealing with conflict can be the denial that it actually exists, transferring out of the community, dissociating from the conflict by insisting that it is the superior's responsibility to take care of it, defusing the conflict

through joking, premature harmonizing, or substituting prayer for honest human effort and responsibility for the acceptance and constructive handling of the conflictual situation (Woodward, 1987).

Summary

Section One has highlighted the ambivalence surrounding conflict, noting that it is defined both negatively and positively in the literature, with a particular emphasis on the former. Interpersonal conflict was looked at within the dyadic context as well as the group development context. The evolution of conflict through its conception, birth and death was developed by interfacing a number of conflict models. This section concluded with a discussion of the importance of this topic of conflict for women religious. The lacuna in the literature about women religious and their handling of conflict pinpoints the need to redress this.

To conclude, "Conflict is a natural and desirable part of human interaction at both the individual and group level...and is inevitable if the members are truly involved" (Hammett and Sofield, 1981, p. 18).

Section Two: Anger

Introduction

Concomitant with conflictual situations is the experience of any number of emotions. Cognizant of this fact, and not denying other emotions, I want to focus particularly on the emotion of anger which women religious may experience in their interpersonal differences. It is important to note at the outset that anger may not be present in every conflictual situation. On the other hand, because it is considered to be one of the negative emotions, I think women in general, and women religious in particular, are uncomfortable with anger, to the point of ignoring, denying, repressing, or suppressing both the recognition and expression of this emotion.

In the literature review of emotions, generally, and anger specifically, it is of paramount importance to note that anger must be recognized, accepted and expressed overtly and constructively in order for us to function in healthy ways. Even if I deny anger, my body does not deny it and it will be expressed. In coming to grips with anger, its causes, sources, functions, and my own particular anger response pattern in dyadic and group situations, then I am acting proactively and in a healthier way. Otherwise, I could be denying it and allowing it to control me. Ferder (1986) sagely reminds

us, "We cannot be angry and assume that no one will know, or that it won't show. It will be expressed. What we do have a choice about, however, is *how* it will be expressed" (p. 84).

What follows is a detailed discussion of emotions, and in particular anger. I think this is necessary in order to contextualize a more indepth elucidation of women religious and anger.

Definitions of Emotions

Numerous definitions of emotions abound in the literature. Gaylin (1984, p. 50), defines an emotion as "a complex phenomenon with at least three separate elements: one autonomic, one a function of the central nervous system; and one cognitive". Averill (1982), in discussing the experience and expression of emotions, includes physiological changes, expressive reactions, and subjective feelings as components of emotions. Elsewhere, Averill (1986), in discussing the social as well as the biological aspects of emotions, states that "emotions are transitory social roles--that is, institutionalized ways of interpreting and responding to particular classes of situations" (p. 100).

Lange (1967), focuses on the causes of emotions and the vaso-motor and cognitive effects of these on people. Arnold (1960), emphasizes that an emotion is an experience

or mental mindset accompanied by feelings, visceral and somatic changes.

One part of the process of experiencing an emotion is the accompanying feelings which help interpret the physiological arousal. Because "feelings are mushy, difficult, nonpalpable slippery things, even by definition, (and are) that elusive, neglected aspect of emotions", (Gaylin, 1979, p. 10), many times they are ignored with the consequent denial of the emotions. Feelings however, allow us to utilize our intelligence and rationality to help interpret a given emotion and guide our response. As such, feelings crystallize the whole experience of our emotions (Gaylin, 1984). With this distinction noted, feelings and emotions will be used interchangeably herein, given their consonance and given their interchangeability in common parlance.

Physiology of Emotions. In order to become more aware of our personal emotional patterns of response, it is important to recognize within ourselves the physiology of our emotions, a signal that something is awry. Much could be said here, but suffice it to note that the physiology of all emotions is basically the same. Some of the physiological responses enacted through the autonomic nervous system include dilation or constriction of the pupils, sweaty palms, increased heart and respiration

rate, increased adrenaline and noradrenaline in the blood, controlled or released sphincters, redirection of the blood from one part of the body to another as in flushed cheeks (Alschuler and Alschuler, 1984; Averill, 1982; Ferder, 1986). These physiological responses actually prepare the body for the action about to occur, commonly known as fight or flight. With such cues that something is amiss, then our interpretation of the emotion will help us determine our response.

Definitions of Anger

Having briefly addressed the topic of emotions, next several definitions of anger are presented, beginning with the historical definitions offered by Darwin and Freud, and followed by more current definitions.

Historically, two definitions stand out in the research literature on anger, namely those of Darwin and Freud. Darwin essentially saw anger as a biological reflex, a survival instinct with a dualistic response of either fight or flight, and Freud saw anger as an unconscious instinct, akin to aggression and rage (Arnold, 1960, Vol.I; Madow, 1972; Stearns, 1972; Tavris, 1982). Both Darwin and Freud saw aggression as part of a person's biological background but "Freud emphasized the destructive, violent aspect of aggression whereas Darwin saw aggression as self defending and adaptive" (Arnold,

1960, Vol. I., p. 80). Basically, "much of the original research on anger mistakenly regarded this emotion as purely a component of aggression, equating the emotion with action which may or may not be a product of that emotion" (Gaylin, 1984, p. 49). These notions of anger, although no longer current, would appear to be part of our socialization and enculturation regarding this emotion: it is dangerous so therefore it must be repressed or suppressed.

Etymologically, anger is derived from the old Norse word, "angr", meaning distress. Stearns (1972), in looking at the etymological roots of anger in several languages, observes that it is not associated with hostility, aggression or rage. Rather it is associated with uneasiness, discomfort, tenseness, resentment and frustration. Current definitions of anger attempt to focus on such aspects.

Bernardez (1988) speaks of anger as the conscious response to injustice, loss, or grievances. Miller (1983) views anger as a potential source of mobilization for action against an injustice one has experienced. Novaco (1975), defines anger as an emotional response to provocation. Viscott (1976), sees anger as a reaction to a hurt or loss. Phelps and Austin (1975) define anger as a legitimate feeling which can be expressed in both healthy and unhealthy ways. Hammett and Sofield (1981),

note that feelings of anger are usually expressed as a reaction to a diminution of self-esteem or sense of worth. "Anger arises in response to a real or imagined threat to ourselves and when we experience frustration of unmet needs or expectations" (p. 95). Hotelling and Reese (1983) suggest that anger is a physical, cognitive, and emotional response to frustration. Lerner (1985) says that anger is a signal worth listening to because it is a cue that something is amiss, "a message that we are being hurt, that our rights are being violated, that our needs or wants are not being adequately met, or simply that something is not right" (p. 1). Manning and Haddock (1989), propose that anger is a natural response to injustice, disappointment, and frustration. Richardson (1918) connects anger with feelings of irritation because of the thwarting of some desire or expectation. Tavris (1982), in her very enlightening book, Anger, the Misunderstood Emotion, concludes that "most social psychologists define anger as a temporary combination of both arousal (physical excitement) and the perception and awareness of feeling angry" (pp. 89-90) The more recent definitions of anger recognize it "as a complex psychophysical phenomenon with wide ranging implications for mental, physical, and social well being" (Gaylin, 1984, p. 50).

Ambivalence Toward Anger

Like conflict, anger is also defined both negatively and positively in the literature (Steffen, 1985).

"Various researchers use different definitions of anger, which helps explain why some theorists evaluate anger as constructive, while others see it as purely destructive" (Gaylin, 1984, p. 49).

The current focus in the literature on anger as a human emotion moves it out of the realm of instinct and passion and into our conscious control. Because of our general ignorance about the psychophysiological interdependence in anger as a human emotion, we may harbor an ambivalence toward it. Some of our early socialization and enculturation related to the emotion of anger may have been useful, but a great deal of it may have been stultifying and ineffective. The end result is for us to see anger as destructive and negative and therefore something to be avoided. It may be difficult for us to believe that anger is not an inevitable consequence of a particular stimulus, but rather a learned one. Anger is determined by how we interpret certain events which happen to us. In sum, "judgment and choice distinguish human beings from other species; judgment and choice are the hallmarks of human anger" (Tavris, 1982, p. 36).

Women and Anger

Anger, as a psychophysiological emotion, occurs when one perceives a physical, psychological, or spiritual hurt or loss. Because it is a human emotion, where judgment and choice are involved, decisions can be made on how to express this anger. This necessitates a recognition of this emotion as anger, an acceptance of it, a searching out of the sources and causes of the anger, the functions it may serve, and finally, one's own particular anger pattern. Then, and only then, can anger be expressed appropriately, choosing from a repertoire of constructive anger response patterns.

A healthy and constructive anger response pattern repertoire takes into account the particular situation, the people involved, and the repercussions if the anger is overtly expressed, since "the decision to get angry has powerful consequences" (Tavris, 1982, p. 45; Madow, 1972; Phelps and Austin, 1975).

It has been well documented in the literature however, that women have been socialized to repress and suppress their anger (Bernardez, 1988; Ferder, 1986; Hammett and Sofield, 1981; Hotelling and Reese, 1983; Lerner, 1982; Miller, 1983; Orbach and Eichenbaum, 1987; Osiek, 1986; Phelps and Austin, 1975; Woodward, 1987). They have been socialized from infancy that anger in females is unfeminine, unladylike, sexually unattractive.

Women who have dared to break the taboo against female anger have been socially "punished" with such derogatory epithets as aggressive, pathological, uncivilized, maladjusted, strident, bitchy, castrating, nagging, shrewish, masculine, sick.

In essence, women have been socialized in this culture to see their expression of anger as bad, evil, and destructive. "Women's expression of anger is usually thwarted, inhibited, or diverted in our culture. This phenomenon acquires the character of a cultural prohibition when we realize that this culture has taken as 'natural' the view that women's anger is a destructive emotion. Biological, medical and religious dicta are then brought in to reinforce the prohibitions, to lend power and authority to this cultural bias, and to mandate conformity" (Bernardez, 1988, p. 1).

Given that anger is not a socially acceptable feeling to express in our culture for either males or females, but more so females, because "the angry person is thought to be lacking in self control" (Osiek, 1987, p. 13), women internalize this social dictum and repress or suppress their anger.

Women Religious and Anger

Women religious then, are in a double bind regarding anger. First, they have to contend with social and

cultural norms and taboos regarding women and anger, and second, they have to contend with religious norms and taboos. Theologically and scripturally, religious life is referred to as a life of perfection. Thus the scriptural maxim, "Be ye perfect", was interpreted in the training of many women religious, more legalistically in a literal letter of the law stance, rather than in its spirit. Literally, such a maxim for religious became "Be ye perfect *now* or else!" (Woodward, 1987, p. 144). Contrastedly, the spirit of this maxim takes into account the important psychological reality that perfection is a process, not a fact.

Wicks (1984), in his insightful and powerful article, "A Threat to Christian Communities: Angry People Acting Passive-Aggressively", lauds the notion of perfection as a goal of religious life. He hastens to add however, that when such a goal has the elimination of anger as one of its values, then "it is a threatening, misguided norm for Christians to follow" (p. 7).

In the novitiate and ongoing training of many religious then, it appears that a certain hierarchy of feelings became established, as can be concluded from the very enlightening research done by Samuels and Lester (1985), which investigated the emotions Catholic nuns and priests experience. Some feelings were experienced frequently, such as love, patience, joy, those commonly

known as the positive emotions, and others infrequently, including anger, hate and contempt, commonly referred to as the negative emotions. Woodward (1987, p. 71), corroborates these findings, noting, "In general it was considered good to have loving and charitable feelings, to feel pious, to be concerned for others or well-disposed to everybody. On the other hand, it was bad to have feelings of anger or sexual feelings of arousal or attractedness".

The trend today in most communities of women religious is away from such legalistic notions of perfection and ensuant formation. However, I think old myths, norms and taboos die hard, with the result that many women religious today are still dealing with guilt, suppression and maybe even still repression related to a direct recognition and expression of emotions in general, and anger in particular.

Well imbued with the fact of anger being historically identified in the Catholic Church as one of the seven deadly or capital sins, women religious today need to become aware of what this really means. Almost nowhere is it clarified that anger, as one of the seven deadly sins, is referring to a destructive expression of anger (Cavanagh, 1985; Ferder, 1986; Steffen, 1985). In and of itself, anger is a good and healthy emotion. When it is expressed in constructive and assertive ways, anger becomes a vital part of growth. It is essential to learn

"that the feeling of anger is a normal human emotion, created by God, and given to us as a gift--a resource for physical and psychological survival" (Ferder, 1986, p. 69).

The crux of this discussion on women religious and anger is to bring into the open how many of us have been trained regarding anger. I think it is only by an open and honest discussion of our past (and perhaps even ongoing) formation regarding anger, that we can truly put to rest such myths, norms and taboos and get on with the real issue of true human and religious growth.

"If our past has taught us to think of anger as wrong, then feeling angry may be perceived as being a bad religious. To avoid being bad, we believe we must avoid any situation that might produce anger. Since disagreement, conflict, and confrontation arouse anger, we believe we must avoid them" (Hammett and Sofield, 1981, p. 23). Such denial "is tantamount to denying one's own God-given human nature--which includes emotions such as anger" (Wicks, 1984, p. 8).

Effects of Not Dealing with Anger

Since anger just doesn't go away, what happens when women religious don't recognize and handle it overtly? Very little has been written on this to date, as noted earlier, yet the comments of the men and women religious

who have dared to write on such a taboo topic have been incisive (Ferder, 1986; Hammett and Sofield, 1981; Wicks, 1984; Woodward, 1987).

In discussing the unhealthy effects of repression and suppression of feelings, particularly anger, I think it is important to emphasize that such feelings go underground and come out, albeit unconsciously, in ways perceived as being more acceptable, even if as equally debilitating physically, psychologically and spiritually.

Some of the unhealthy ways for dealing with repressed or suppressed anger include physical sickness, depression, passive aggression and hostility (Madow, 1972; Phelps and Austin, 1975; Wicks, 1984; Woodward, 1987).

When, as women religious, we do not understand and practice a holistic spirituality, which places as much importance on a healthy mind and body as a "healthy" soul and spirit, then unconsciously, depression and physical sickness are perceived as more acceptable than actual recognition and overt, yet constructive expression of anger. Consequently, the anger is turned in on ourselves or expressed in destructive ways. "Anger turned inward may result in depression. When we cannot express anger in a constructive fashion we may resort to hostility to communicate the hurt" (Hammett and Sofield, 1981, p. 23; p. 24).

One of the reasons why repressed or suppressed anger may eventually turn to hostility is that unresolved anger is tapped into each time one becomes angry. In this way, a given situation in which anger is experienced may be the proverbial straw that breaks the camel's back (Woodward, 1987).

On the other hand, the hostility related to unresolved anger may be expressed in passive aggressive behaviors, where overtly there is the appearance of being compliant and passive, yet covertly, hostility is expressed in any number of destructive and obstructive ways: being late or not showing up for an appointment or meeting, not completing tasks on time, constantly questioning decisions or sabotaging decisions being made, ignoring people by giving them the cold shoulder treatment, "forgetting" to fulfill a promise, staying in one's room and sulking.

The list could go on and on. Suffice it to note here, I am not specifically referring to the passive aggressive personality disorder referred to in the literature, but rather to the particular passive aggressive behaviors exhibited by many women religious who have not been able to recognize and overtly express their anger in constructive and healthy ways. "Rather than such behavior being tied to a serious personality deficit, it is symptomatic of a problem in the environment.

Unfortunately, in many cases Christians train Christians to avoid anger or to be indirect in the way they express it" (Wicks, 1984, p. 11).

I believe that authentic, holistic spirituality for women religious, even with its goal of perfection, must be re-contextualized to an understanding of such a lifestyle within the parameters of a process of maturation: physical, psychological and spiritual. Authentic spirituality takes into account all the facets of our lives, not just the spiritual aspects. To this end, then, authentic spirituality includes finding a way of expressing anger that is congruent with the holiness and wholeness to which women religious are called. Such authentic spirituality "mirrors itself in the ways we express anger" (Ferder, 1986, p. 68).

Summary

Anger has many connotations in the literature, ranging from the perspective that it is a base animal physiological instinct or reflex, closely akin to aggression, rage and passion over which humans have no control, to the perspective of more recent research, that it is truly a human emotion of psychophysiological components with judgment and choice its hallmarks (Arnold, 1960; Averill, 1982, 1986; Ellis, 1977; Gaylin, 1979, 1984; Izard, 1972; James, 1967; Lange, 1967; Lerner, 1985;

Madow, 1972; Novaco, 1975; Stearns, 1972; Tavris, 1982).

As a human emotion, anger is a signal that something is askew for the individual; there has been a perceived physical, psychological or spiritual hurt or frustration.

The literature noted that anger is seen by some as negative, others as positive, with noted ambivalence toward it. It was discussed that viewing anger negatively or having ambivalence toward it has affected women in general, and women religious in particular. The physical, psychological and spiritual effects of not dealing with anger were also highlighted from the literature.

Section Three: Organization as Culture

Introduction

The Congregation de Notre Dame (CND) in this research is considered a cultural organization. This fact became evident only in the data analysis stage of this research. Time and time again the interviewees, as members of the CND, were bound, many unconsciously, by the values, norms and taboos of behavior of the organization. After recurring cycles of data analysis, consonant with inductive qualitative analysis, what has emerged from the data is that the CND displays the characteristics of a cultural organization. With this focus emerging from the

data, a brief overview of the pertinent literature is given here.

Organization Characteristics

An organization can be viewed as a group. The parameters for the constitution of a group are quite broad ranging from an aggregate of people at a bus depot to a number of people who meet for very specific purposes. Some people come together on a regular basis for task related and/or social-emotional purposes, including affinity groups, interest groups, therapy groups and religious groups.

An organization is a group that is organized for a particular purpose. Traditionally, it has had a leadership or management chart indicating the vertical and horizontal organizational structure and chain of command indicating the allocation of people and resources for certain goals (Adams, 1984).

Olmsted and Hare (1959) define a group as "a plurality of individuals in contact with one another, who take the other into account and who are aware of some significant commonality" (p. 11). Cartwright and Zander (1960) focus on the interdependence in a group organization. "A group is a collection of individuals who have relations to one another that make them interdependent to some significant degree" (p. 46).

Guthrie et al. (1978) refer to a group from the perspective of its common goals or needs. Thus, a group can be seen as "a collection of people who choose to interact around their common needs" (p. 81). In sum, a group can be defined as two or more persons interacting face to face with one another in such a way that each influences and is influenced by the other (Littlejohn, 1983).

Several characteristics emerge from the foregoing. An individual member's identification with the group as a whole and with specific members is predicated on common interests, goals and needs. As a group, there is interdependence and a collective or holistic characteristic that warrants some kind of unity in order to achieve these ends.

The group, a liaison between the individual and society, provides stability and a life space for establishing and achieving goals and tasks. Thus, "group members share certain values and self interests and work together to achieve their shared goals" (Guthrie et al., 1978, p. 81).

CND: An Organization. The CND, as an organized group, can be seen as a deliberately formed group with definite goals and purposes. Formed in 1653, for the purposes of education, its organizational flow chart is

pyramidal and hierarchical with a superior general at the top, provincial superiors under her and then the different sub-groups or provinces. It is a task group where members join because of common interests, goals and affinities to the vision of the foundress, Marguerite Bourgeoys. Yet the CND is more than a task group; it is a life commitment group based on a faith response to a call of a vowed life of prayer and apostolic service. Thus, it is also a social-emotional support group. As both a task and social-emotional support group its challenge is to balance these two dimensions in carrying out its goals. In sum, Hersey and Blanchard (1982, p. 285) state, "A total organization is really a composite of its various ... groups".

Theories of Organization

An organization can be viewed from a number of perspectives. McGregor's Theory X - Theory Y has become a classic in organizational literature. Theory X assumes that people are generally irresponsible, unreliable and immature. Thus, an organization with centralized and pyramidal leadership directs the group members. Theory Y, on the other hand, assumes that people are responsible, self-directed and creative if adequately motivated. Thus, the organization, with a more collaborative and circular

kind of government supports and facilitates group members (Hersey and Blanchard, 1982).

Other approaches to understanding organizations include the structural or rational approach, the human resource approach, the political approach and the symbolic approach (Bolman and Deal, 1985).

The structural or rational approach is a more traditional view of organizations, where the group members and activities are controlled by legitimate centralized authority. This type of organization is hierarchical and pyramidal where people follow the chain of command in carrying out the goals. Here there is goal direction, structural clarity and task accomplishment with limited attention given to people's needs and wishes.

The human resource approach in organizations is one where "organizations exist to serve human needs" (Bolman and Deal, 1985, p. 65). Here there tends to be more organizational democracy and participative management.

The political approach to organizations is based on the assumptions that "power, conflict, and the distribution of scarce resources (are) the central issues of organizations" (Bolman and Deal, 1985, p. 2). Thus, the organization is viewed more as a composite of coalitions and interest groups.

The symbolic approach "assumes that organizations are full of questions that cannot be answered, problems that

cannot be solved and events that cannot be understood or managed" (Bolman and Deal, 1985, p. 152). As a result, group members find and utilize myths, rituals, ceremonies, stories, humor and play as means of creating meaning in the organization.

Summary. In sum, an organization as a formalized group can be understood from a number of perspectives. Each perspective has its own assumptions and emphasizes different aspects of the organization. No one organization uses just one of these approaches. Rather, an organization may focus on different approaches at different moments in its history and may attempt to use a variety of approaches. As Quinn, (1988, p. 3) sagely notes, "One of the most difficult things for most of us to understand is that organizations are dynamic". The CND, as an organization, like any other organization, can be understood at different times in its history from all of the perspectives discussed above.

Organization as Culture

An organization as culture is not a new idea. According to Deal, (1985, p. 300), "The symbolic side of organizations has a long tradition in the literature and lore of organizational studies...". Culture encompasses such components as specific values, norms and taboos of

behavior, rituals and modes of communication (Bolman and Deal, 1985; Deal, 1985; Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Marx, 1988; Morgan, 1986; Peters and Waterman, 1982; Peters and Austin, 1986; Naisbitt and Auburdene, 1985; Schein, 1987, 1988).

Culture can be defined along a continuum from shared values (Peters and Waterman, 1982) to the way things are done around here (Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Marx, 1988) to a system of values, laws, ideologies and day to day rituals (Morgan, 1986) to an organization which has a number of "cultural" elements including values, rituals and communication networks (Deal and Kennedy, 1982). "Culture is a concept that captures the subtle, intangible, largely unconscious forces that shape a society or a workplace. Culture is a social fiction created by people to give meaning to work and life" (Deal, 1985, pp. 300-301). Simply put, "culture is the set of values and assumptions that underlie the statement: 'this is how we do things around here'" (Quinn, 1988, p. 66).

Looking at an organization as a cultural organization is a matter of looking at the symbolic side of an organization and tapping into the subtle, largely unconscious and therefore unnamed forces that shape its way of being (ontology), knowing (epistemology) and acting.

The culture of an organization is its warp and woof, so to speak, its *raison d'être*, apart from the stated organizational goals, objectives and mission statement. It is largely an unwritten code of laws that govern its values, norms and taboos of behavior, an organization's unwritten list of dos and don'ts. It is "a system of informal rules that spells out how people are to behave most of the time" (Deal and Kennedy, 1982, p. 15). It is "a learned pattern of unconscious (or semiconscious) thought, reflected and reinforced by behavior, that silently and powerfully shapes the experience of a people" (Deal, 1985, p. 301).

Pros and Cons of a Cultural Organization. On the plus side, when a cultural organization is functional and healthy, it creates meaning, stability and predictability. On the minus side, unless it evolves and changes with its people, it can become obsolete and a stricture preventing growth and expansion.

A cultural organization that has become dysfunctional insists on the letter of the law, and adherence to structures, values, norms and taboos that are no longer viable. This leads to fragmentation where there is a lack of synchrony between what is said and what is done. What occurs is a divergence between the public and private faces of the cultural organization which can lead to a

situation "where the organization becomes increasingly unable to deal with real problems" (Morgan, 1986, p. 123).

Summary. The characteristics of an organization as an organized group have been highlighted. Different organized groups were touched on. A number of approaches as helps to understanding organizations were detailed. These included, Theory X - Theory Y, the structural approach, the human resources approach, the political approach and the symbolic approach. Several definitions of culture used to refer to organizations were offered. The positive and negative aspects of cultural organizations were mentioned.

Summary and Conclusions

To conclude this literature review on the various aspects of conflict and anger, a number of points are reiterated. First, conflict has many connotations, but the essence of this phenomenon, no matter the assumptions or discipline, is twofold: conflict is the result of interpersonal differences, incompatible goals, wishes, desires, and can be viewed either negatively or positively (Beals and Siegel, 1966; Bercovitch, 1984; Boulding, 1962; Coser, 1956; Crum, 1984; Deutsch, 1984; Flaherty, 1987; Folger and Poole, 1981; Kriesberg, 1973; Mack and Snyder, 1973; Rex, 1981; Scherer et al. 1975). When viewed

negatively, conflict is perceived as a zero-sum game where there's a right and wrong, winners and losers. When viewed positively, it becomes a win-win situation where differences are accommodated in a respect for plurality. The reality for most people is that conflict is never just at either end of such a continuum, but rather somewhere inbetween. Probably for many of us, due to our familial and social enculturations around conflict, it may tend to be more toward the negative end of the continuum.

In this overview of conflict and anger, it has been noted that there are gender differences related to the handling of conflict and the expression of emotions, particularly that of anger. Culturally, women have been socialized to be the primary nurturers and caregivers, taking care of others' needs, many times to the detriment of their own. Women are expected to foster peace and harmony to the point that any sign of conflict or expression of anger is taboo. These summary observations are supported in the literature, scarce as it is, addressing women and conflict and women and anger (Bernandez, 1988; Delmater and McNamara, 1987; Hotelling and Reese, 1983; Kaplan et al., 1983; Miller, 1976, 1983; Orbach and Eichenbaum, 1987; Phelps and Austin, 1975).

Even less has been written about conflict and anger within religious life (Hammett and Sofield, 1981; Sofield and Juliano, 1987; Wicks, 1984; Woodward, 1987). The

lacuna in the literature indicates two things to me. First, there are probably norms and taboos surrounding even discussing such topics, and second, the need to bring such topics into the open. It is precisely because of the paucity in the literature and the need for conflict and anger to be "recognized, validated and confirmed" (Kaplan et al., 1983, p. 29), that I have undertaken this study. The phenomena of conflict and anger would appear to have acquired the characteristics of cultural norms and taboos, with "religious dicta then brought in to reinforce the prohibitions, to lend power and authority to these cultural biases, and to mandate conformity" (Bernardez, 1988, p. 1).

In conclusion then, I think that many women religious have been formed, trained, and enculturated to "support a style of behavior emphasizing control, suppression, repression, denial of anger and avoidance of conflict" (Wicks, 1984, p. 7; Eisikovits, 1983).

The third body of literature reviewed in this Chapter II has been that of an organization as culture. From the literature, it was seen that the CND possessed the characteristics of both an organization and a cultural organization. The positive and negative aspects of being a cultural organization were mentioned.

The research participants in their description and meaning of their experiences of conflict and anger, within

the organization of the Congregation de Notre Dame, highlight time and again, its conflict and anger norms and taboos and the effects of these on their ways of being (ontology), knowing (epistemology) and acting.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

The purposes of this chapter are twofold. In Section One there is a brief discussion of the characteristics and rationales for both quantitative and qualitative research designs. In Section Two there is an overview of the research design and methodology for this qualitative study, including the carrying out of two pilot studies, purposeful sampling of participants for the study, criterion for purposeful sampling, actual participants of the study, the researcher's role in the study, data collection, management, reduction, and analysis techniques, and the trustworthiness of the study.

Section One: Types of Research Design

Introduction

Three eras of research design have been suggested in the literature: prepositivist, positivist and postpositivist (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Current discussion of these designs focuses on the second and third eras of the positivist and postpositivist

traditions, known broadly as quantitative and qualitative research respectively.

Quantitative Research Design

Positivism assumes there is "a single, tangible reality 'out there' that can be broken apart into pieces capable of being studied independently..." (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 28; Phillips, 1987). This position further assumes the knower can be separated from the known, linear causality, generalizability of observations and results free from knower bias.

In research, this paradigm has come to be known as the dominant objectivist science paradigm of hypothetico-deductive methodology with objective, "quantitative measurement, experimental design, and multivariate parametric statistical analysis ... the epitome of 'good' science" (Patton, 1980, p. 19; Douglas, 1985; McCracken, 1988; Morgan and Smircich, 1980).

The quantitative research design is best used for studies measuring observable and quantifiable data of a reality that is perceived as objective and "out there" such as in lab experiments and surveys. In this deductive approach to research, with its random sampling, hypotheses are tested and conclusions drawn which can be generalized to a total population.

Qualitative Research Design

The postpositivist era of research, with its focus on the naturalistic paradigm or the constructionist paradigm for research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; McCracken, 1988; Mishler, 1986; Pearce, 1977), focuses more on an interfacing of knower and known, a co-construction of reality in an open-ended and unobtrusive way, a natural setting, the knower as instrument, utilization of tacit knowledge, and idiographic rather than nomothetic (lawlike) generalizations (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; McCracken, 1988; Patton, 1980).

Research methodology in this alternative paradigm emphasizes qualitative measurement with a holistic-inductive approach to data, detailed descriptions, and direct quotations which "permit the evaluation researcher to record and understand people in their own terms" (Patton, 1980, p. 22).

Section Two: Qualitative Research Design

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to highlight the description and meaning CND women religious give to their experiences of conflict and its concomitant emotions, particularly anger, within their communal lifestyle.

Because the focus is on people and the construction of meaning in their lives, the holistic-inductive qualitative research design is used. Such a design attempts to understand social phenomena rather than predict them and "is essential in the study of people to know just how people define the situation in which they find themselves" (Marshall and Rossman, 1989, p. 46).

Indepth Interviewing

The specific type of qualitative research design chosen for this study was indepth interviewing, where a focused, but more open-ended type of interview guide was used.

The questions used in the interview were formulated along the parameters of description and meaning for each of the research areas. They were open-ended and served as a guide for the participants to share their stories. For example, participants were asked to describe a conflict situation and then to give some meaning to it. Likewise, they were asked to describe the emotions they experienced within the conflict and to give meaning to them.

This type of interviewing is preferable "when the interviewer knows what he or she does not know and can therefore frame appropriate questions to find it out" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 269). Such a methodology assumes an interfacing of the knower and the known, a

"cooperative inquiry" (Heron, 1981, p. 19), in which there is a co-construction of multiple meanings, person and context dependent (Douglas, 1985; Mishler, 1986).

This methodology is consonant with a holistic-inductive approach, "where the researcher neither manipulates the setting under study nor predetermines what variables or categories are worth measuring" (Patton, 1980, p. 46). With the qualitative interviewer as instrument, the goal of indepth interviewing is "an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience rather than in being able to predict or control the experience" (Seidman, 1985, p. 15).

As such then, indepth interviewing is conversation with a purpose, that "of allowing respondents to tell their own story in their own terms" (McCracken, 1988, p. 34; Patton, 1980).

Pilot Studies

Two pilot studies were carried out prior to conducting the actual research. An informal pilot study was carried out with two US women religious, not CNDs, but whose lives parallel the lived experience of CNDs. The purposes of this informal pilot study were twofold. First, I wanted to familiarize myself with conducting the interview process. Since I was audiotaping the

interviews, I wanted to become comfortable with the logistics of taping, and at the same time attending to the interviewee. Second, I wanted feedback on the interview guide to ensure that the purposes of the study and the focus of the interview guide were consonant. As a result of this informal pilot, I made two changes. One interviewee suggested that there be a question on the effects of not dealing with conflict and expressing anger. When the second interviewee requested a copy of her interview tape for future use, I decided to offer each interviewee a copy of her interview tape.

I carried out a formal pilot study to determine where I would gather my data. As a Canadian CND, I am familiar with the conflict and anger norms and taboos of behavior of the congregation in a number of areas of Canada. Presuming that I would be returning to Canada to work, I wanted to be able to use the results of this research within that context. If there were significant differences in how CNDs in Canada and the United States handled conflict and expressed emotions, then I would do the data collection solely in Canada. To determine where I would collect the data, I carried out a formal pilot study with four CNDs within the United States to compare CND conflict and anger norms and taboos of behavior, of a different national culture with those of my own culture. My assessment was that the culture of the Congregation de

Notre Dame appeared to supercede any differences in the national cultures to the point that the conflict and anger norms and taboos were basically identical.

The Congregation de Notre Dame, as an international community of approximately 2500 women, would appear to constitute a strong cultural organization. As such, the conflict and anger norms and taboos seem to be essentially the same within the community, despite ethnic and national cultural differences. As a result, I gathered the data from CNDs living in the United States, Central America and Canada.

Purposeful Sampling

In qualitative research, sampling procedures are different from those in quantitative research. The emphasis shifts from random sampling for generalization purposes in the latter to purposeful sampling for idiographic description in the former.

Qualitative research does not focus on how many display a certain cultural pattern or behavior; rather its focus is "to gain access to the cultural categories and assumptions according to which one culture construes the world.... In other words, qualitative research does not survey the terrain, it mines it" (McCracken, 1988, p. 17).

The purposeful sampling for this research was a process of my speaking to the CNDs in their local houses,

sharing with them the topic and purpose of this research and inviting them to participate. I suggested a certain time frame within which they would inform me of their wish to participate in the study. Times were then scheduled for the interviews.

In my meetings with the sisters I communicated with them how the data would be used, and how their confidentiality and anonymity would be respected in my use of the data. The written consent form (Appendix A), as part of the interview process was discussed. In essentially all instances where I interviewed the participants, I spent a period of time (overnights and meals) in a given convent, where any CND could request further clarification regarding the interview process or follow-up after it.

In the time I spent with each group of CNDs, every effort was made to establish trust and rapport by discussing for example, my interest in such a research topic and current happenings within our congregation.

It is significant to note that even within the context of purposeful sampling, the people who were interviewed volunteered. They appeared to have a certain comfortableness with talking about such topics, even though it was still hard for a few of them. A number of the interviewees reported that they were actually dealing with such issues in personal therapy, counseling or

spiritual direction. Thus, they seemed to have a vocabulary for naming and discussing such issues.

Several CNDs, for various reasons, did not volunteer to participate in the research project when invited to consider doing so. Some actually said to me that they would pray for the success of the project but that they couldn't talk about such things at present. A number also added that they were happy these topics were finally being addressed.

Criterion for Purposeful Sampling. The major criterion for this purposeful sampling was that of information redundancy (Douglas, 1985; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Essentially, this involves interviewing enough women in this indepth way so that data emerge in all their variations and ramifications to the point of redundancy. This criterion was reached with the interviewing of 21 women. In sum then, "the criterion invoked to determine when to stop sampling is informational redundancy, not a statistical confidence level" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 202). Because naturalistic inquiry is basically indeterminate, then the interviewer as instrument can respond and adapt as necessary.

Research Participants. Twenty-one CND women religious from the Americas participated in this research. They were Caucasian women, ranging in age from early 30s (profession, 1985) to mid 80s (profession, 1923). All of them had first degrees and a number of them had graduate degrees. Their professional experiences varied from classroom teaching at all levels, to administration to parish ministry to services within the CND organization. The initial formation of the participants within the cultural organization of the CND spanned from seven (7) to 69 years. A number of the participants were trained and became official members of the CND (made profession) after Vatican Council II and the ensuing renewal of religious life.

Summary. Purposeful sampling in qualitative research was contrasted with random sampling in quantitative research. Informational redundancy as the criterion for purposeful sampling was discussed. The actual process of purposeful sampling for this study was given.

Interviews

The indepth interviews (Appendix B) were carried out in CND houses. Each interviewee signed a written consent form (Appendix A) and completed an autobiographical form

(Appendix C). The interview for each person ranged from 60 to 90 minutes.

At the beginning of each indepth interview, the purpose of the study was reiterated, referring again to the signed written consent form each interviewee had completed. Each person was reassured of the confidentiality of the interview and the information on the autobiographical form she completed. The autobiographical information would be to help me contextualize their particular stories within their total life experiences. She was also assured of the protection of her personal identity in the use of any data from her interview.

Because of the sacredness of each participant's story, and because of confidentiality and anonymity, each research participant is simply identified by her year of profession (the year she officially became a member of the CND) when the data are analyzed. Names of countries, geographic locations and local communities are all omitted in the data display and analysis. Specific identifying details or circumstances of conflict and anger events have also been altered or omitted as necessary to ensure confidentiality and anonymity but without in anyway de-emphasizing the importance and impact of the stories.

After interviewing each CND, I spoke with her personally, by telephone or mail for follow-up and/or

debriefing. In addition, I made each participant a copy of her interview tape for her personal use.

It appeared that the interview was a powerful experience for most, if not all of the participants. A number of them have contacted me since the interview to share what has been happening with them and to share what a cathartic experience the interview was.

Researcher's Role

One of the major points of debate in most research literature is the role of the researcher. It was discussed earlier that quantitative research assumes the knower and the known can be separated, specifically by an objective methodology that is bias free. Thus, in the early stages of qualitative naturalistic inquiry, it was criticized because of supposed researcher bias and contamination; the researcher didn't keep the "appropriate" distance and objectivity necessary for "good" research .

The emphasis today in all research is that no research is bias free (Oakley, 1981). What is paramount here is that each researcher, in as much as he/she is aware, make known to the audience his/her own assumptions and biases and how these may affect the data.

Peshkin (1988) reiterates this dictum. "The point I argue here is that researchers, notwithstanding their use

of quantitative or qualitative methods, their research problem, or their reputation for personal integrity, should systematically identify their subjectivity throughout the course of their research... (and note how such) qualities have the capacity to filter, skew, shape, block, transform, construe, and misconstrue what transpires from the outset of a research project to its culmination in a written statement" (p. 17).

In her article "Interviewing Women: A Contradiction in Terms", Oakley (1981), critiques traditional interviewing practices where the interviewer was to remain "objective" by "pretending not to have opinions" (p. 36), when asked questions by the interviewees. As a feminist, she recognizes that women's experiences are best validated in a co-construction of meaning by both the interviewer and the interviewee. Oakley adds, "It becomes clear that, in most cases, the goal of finding out about people through interviewing is best achieved when the relationship of interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship" (p. 41).

Insider and Outsider. In this research, I was both an insider and an outsider: an insider as a member of the CND and quite familiar with my perceptions of its conflict

and anger norms and taboos, and an outsider, as a researcher attempting to make unfamiliar the familiar. Obviously, as a member of the Congregation de Notre Dame for some 25+ years, I have certain assumptions about the norms and taboos in the organization regarding the handling of conflict and the expressing of emotions, particularly that of anger, based on my own lived experience and observing the lived experiences of others. From such lived experiences, I sensed a great need to look at such issues within the CND and I also had an intuitive sense of what I would find in doing this kind of research. Because of my own experience regarding the values, behavior norms and taboos in the patriarchal, hierarchical structure and culture of my congregation, I hold some basic assumptions that there are norms and taboos on the overt handling of conflict and expression of anger. Consequently, I think there can be unhealthy responses to such repression and suppression such as passive aggression, psychosomatic illnesses, all the while people are "offering it up as penance".

My particular objective in this research project as insider/outsider was to make unfamiliar the familiar within the communal lifestyle of the Congregation de Notre Dame. Therefore, I had to address this concern prior to doing this research project. I experienced the typical researcher's dilemma of "contaminating" or "influencing"

the data, a throwback to the purist notions of quantitative research. To take care of this concern and to know specifically what my own assumptions were about conflict and anger going into the research, I took a number of steps to ensure as much "objectivity" as possible.

Objectivity Measures As Insider. I carried out a number of objectivity measures to help me maintain a certain balance as an insider. First, I did an informal pilot with two women religious (not CNDs) to help me familiarize myself with the interview process and revise the wording of the interview guide to ensure that the purpose of the study and the focus of the interview guide were consonant.

Second, I had a woman religious (not a CND) interview me prior to my conducting the research, using the same focused interview guide. This interview was audiotaped so I could refer to it throughout the research process. I wanted to be upfront with my own assumptions regarding the research topic and the audiotape was a record of these that I could go back to. I wanted to make sure that the interviewees told their stories and that I wasn't putting words in their mouths, so to speak. Knowing my own assumptions was an extra measure to help safeguard against this. In addition, I consistently asked interviewees for

feedback on this very issue at the end of their interviews. Time and again the interviewees stated they felt very much at ease in telling their own stories and felt no pressure from me to do otherwise. In essence, I was not putting words in their mouths.

Because I wanted to truly hear others' stories and the meanings they gave to experiences of conflict and anger in their lives, then my challenge, both as a researcher and as a member of this community of women religious, was "to strike a balance between formality and informality..." (McCracken, 1988, p. 26).

I am cognizant of the fact that, in many ways, the interview is an unnatural context for conversation and real self disclosure (Douglas, 1985; Mishler, 1986; Oakley, 1981). In this research I wanted to be able to establish the trust and rapport vital for such a process of cooperative inquiry, but I didn't want to get in the way of such a process where "letting my own opinions show (would be) ... a block to data collection" (Measor, 1985, p. 74). In sum, "rapport is a stance vis-a-vis the person being interviewed. Neutrality is a stance vis-a-vis the content of what that person says" (Patton, 1980, p. 231).

In a further effort to maintain such a balance in this study I have had two outside debriefers with whom I have shared, at regular intervals, different aspects of the research process and who have played the devil's

advocate, so to speak. They consistently challenged my generalizations unsupported by data. They reminded me of the ongoing necessity of making unfamiliar the familiar.

Disadvantages of Being An Insider. Apart from the ongoing tension of making unfamiliar the familiar, the disadvantages of being an insider in this research have been minimal to date. One I have noted is the different reactions I have received within the CND regarding the project. For those who are actually working on such issues in their own lives, there is a sigh of relief that perhaps at last, the CND is looking at its conflict and anger norms and taboos. For others in the CND, particularly at the leadership level, I have sensed, on the one hand, a certain amount of support for the ups and downs of doing research, but on the other hand, a benign ignoring of the content and substantive issues related to the research. In addition, there has been little or no discussion at this level regarding what might be done with the results of the research, whereas a number of follow-up suggestions have come from the grassroots level, so to speak. The oft quoted scripture verse may have some significance here: "A prophet is never accepted in his/her own country".

Advantages of Being An Insider. There were a number of advantages of being an insider doing this kind of research. When I requested to go and speak to CNDs in their different houses about my research and to invite them to consider participating in the project, I received an immediate invitation. There was immediate access because I was an insider even if I was not known personally by these women prior to the project.

A number of the CND women whom I interviewed did not know me personally, yet it seemed that those who came forward to be interviewed, shared very deeply on such sensitive issues. I had a sense that the interviewees felt I would be able to frame their stories within the context of our common lived experience of CND and would not be "shocked".

I sensed these women trusted that I would respect the sacredness of their stories. A couple of participants, however, seemed somewhat surprised at their stark candidness of their sharing some painful experiences in their lives. They needed further reassurance at the end of their interviews about the confidentiality and anonymity of their stories.

The interviews appeared cathartic for a number of the participants and even helped some come in touch with certain growth issues in their lives, just by the mere

fact of having a safe place in which to share at such an indepth level.

Summary. In discussing the researcher's role, I highlighted the particular challenges there are for a person, who, as both insider and outsider, does research in an area he/she is already very familiar with. I noted the objectivity measures taken to offset such biases and assumptions. I concluded with a brief overview of the advantages and disadvantages of being an insider.

Data Collection, Management, Analysis

Doing data collection, management and analysis is quite different from reading about it. Nothing I read prepared me for the ongoing challenges involved. It has been both exhilarating and painful, all absorbing and yet lonely! Many hours, weeks and months of pondering, thinking, and working with the data can be made more bearable by carrying out specific steps related to the collection and management of the data. Only then can the analysis come together. Some of these steps are now highlighted. Although an effort has been made here to separate these for discussion purposes, in reality, there is more overlapping and recycling through these stages.

Data Collection. The data for this research was obtained through indepth interviewing. Sixty to ninety minute interviews were carried out with twenty-one participants. Each participant signed a written consent form before the interview, and after the interview, completed an autobiographical information sheet, for use during the data analysis.

In an effort to make sense of the voluminous amount of field data which is characteristic of qualitative research, initial data analysis was concurrent with data collection "so that every new act of investigation takes into account everything that has been learned so far" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 209). In this way, each successive interviewee "adds to and simultaneously challenges the previously existing understandings" (Holtzblatt, 1982, p. 155). Because qualitative research is inductive, it necessitates multiple cycles of analysis where categories, themes and patterns are constantly extended and refined.

Data Management. To facilitate the data collection and management stages of the research, a number of steps were taken, including the following:

- 1) Each person's interview was audiotaped to increase the accuracy of data collection and to enable me to be more attentive to each interviewee (Douglas, 1985, Lincoln and

Guba, 1985; McCracken, 1988; Mishler, 1986; Patton, 1980).

2) A field log was maintained which recorded the date, time and place of each interview. Any pertinent field notes were recorded primarily after each person's interview, and included in the field log.

3) A personal journal, begun at the beginning of this research process, was maintained. Herein I noted personal observations about the cyclical nature of the dissertation process and insights about where to go next. As an inductive process, the next steps for such qualitative research were grounded in the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Data Analysis. To facilitate data management and analysis, I also carried out a number of steps, including

1) I transcribed each interview verbatim, since description and direct quotations are the essence of naturalistic inquiry. Each transcribed text ranged from 38 to 66 double spaced typed pages. In the transcription process, I capitalized or put in boldprint in the texts any pertinent comments related to the research questions of conflict and anger.

2) I bracketed, after specific excerpts, any personal observations from the tapes about the interviewees' voice tone, quality and volume as an aid for analysis.

3) I did several readings of each interview to become

totally familiar with the stories of the participants. Only then did I go through the interviews and make pertinent marginal notes related to themes, categories, and patterns.

4) I did three more separate readings of the interviews after which I did summary sheets on each interview to look for commonalities among the data related to types of conflicts, meanings of conflicts, types of emotions and meanings attributed. I listed any conflict and anger norms and taboos the interviewees shared.

5) I color coded the transcripts according to the themes of conflict, emotions, norms and taboos and additional themes as another step of the data management and analysis.

6) I went through several cycles of attempting to see which data themes and categories were emerging from the data, in an effort to truly offer a rich iterative description of conflict and anger.

7) At the suggestion of a committee member, I took a week apart from actively working with the data after which I listened to the tapes again with the transcripts to check for areas that might have been missed.

8) I spent about a month with the data when nothing new emerged but during which time I couldn't write despite all the outlines and other helps. I had so much data, so many

ideas that I went through the proverbial writer's block, after which things came together.

Following suggestions from Seidman's research (1985) regarding data management and analysis, ongoing decisions were made regarding what data to use for analysis. Essentially, repetitious material, tangential material, material which could compromise the confidentiality and anonymity of an individual was not be used. Moreover, any data used, were identified solely by the year of profession of the interviewee, in order to protect the identity and confidentiality of each individual concerned.

Data analysis is an ongoing cyclical process of "bringing order to the data, organizing what there is into patterns, categories, and basic descriptive units" (Patton, 1980, p. 268). In holistic-inductive research, through the constant comparative method of analyzing the data, and recurring cycles of data analysis, the different patterns, categories, themes, and metaphors are displayed and analyzed. In qualitative research these emerge from the data rather than being imposed on it beforehand (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This became so apparent when, through these many cycles of data analysis, the CND conflict and anger norms and taboos emerged as the lenses through which all the other data were focused.

The main goal of data analysis is to determine how the patterns, categories, assumptions and relationships

perceived in the data are constructed to give meaning to each interviewee's world view in general, and life in particular (McCracken, 1988). In other words, the essence of inductive data analysis is "making sense of field data" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 202).

One final, but important aspect of the data analysis is the instance(s) of the negative case (Patton, 1980; Reason and Rowan, 1981). Recognizing the plurality of perception and meaning attributed to what appeared on the surface to be similar experiences, I have attempted to be aware of and give due recognition to the categories, patterns, and themes which are different from the most obvious ones which have emerged from the data. This means looking for other ways of organizing and describing the data. It was in such instances that the help of my debriefers and research committee became useful to "shock me out of my habitual ways of thinking and experiencing" (Reason, 1981, p. 247).

Summary. The steps involved in the data collection, management and analysis of this qualitative research were summarized. It was pointed out that although the steps were discussed as being sequential, the actual process also has a cyclical nature to it where recurring cycles of data collection, management and analysis occur.

Trustworthiness of the Study

Because of the nature of qualitative research, the criteria established for the trustworthiness of quantitative research, namely, internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity, are not applicable. Instead, the criteria for the accountability and trustworthiness of qualitative research include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Marshall and Rossman, 1989).

Ongoing efforts to meet these criteria have included the following:

- 1) triangulation (Measor, 1985) of data sources where women religious in different sites of the Congregation de Notre Dame have been interviewed;
- 2) interviewee feedback and input on the collection and analysis of the interview data. This was carried out with each participant after the interview by personal contact, telephone contact or correspondence in order to provide an opportunity to give further meaning and closure to anything pertinent to her from the interview. It was further carried out when I had as many of the interviewees that I could get in touch with, over a period of a month, read the analysis and give me feedback on whether I was true to their stories. Their comments confirmed the substance of the analysis;

- 3) debriefer feedback during all stages of the research;
- 4) a personal audiotaped interview, using the same interview guide as I used with the participants in the research, and carried out before the beginning of the actual research;
- 5) maintenance of a personal journal and a field log both of which have constituted an audit trail of the entire research process, including its personal, logistical, substantive and methodological aspects;
- 6) ongoing data analysis which has taken into account the refinement and extension of emergent categories, themes and patterns, as well as instances of competing categories, themes and patterns (negative cases).

Summary

The purposes of this chapter have been twofold: first, to briefly overview research design in general, and second, to detail the research design for this qualitative, inductive natural research. Specifically, indepth interviewing has been used as the type of qualitative research design for the purposes of this study.

Purposeful sampling was used in this research where the focus was on "mining the terrain, not surveying it". The focus was not on random sampling for generalization purposes. Rather it was on obtaining a thick iterative

slice of the data of the CND vis a vis conflict and anger.

The participants were accessed by my approaching groups of CNDs in a number of local communities in the Americas, sharing with them the purpose and topic of the research, and inviting them to participate. After signing written consent forms, twenty-one women religious of the CND each participated in a 60-90 minute indepth audiotaped interview. Each interviewee also completed an autobiographical information sheet for use in the data analysis.

In this chapter, I have discussed my role as researcher and a CND. I shared the steps I took to ensure that I made the familiar, unfamiliar, including an informal pilot study, naming and coming to grips with my own assumptions regarding the research topic through my own audiotaped interview prior to my beginning the research.

I detailed the steps in data collection, management and analysis. I discussed informational redundancy through the constant comparative method as the criterion used to determine when I was finding redundancy or repetition in the data.

Finally, I looked at the trustworthiness of the study and the six measures taken to ensure this trustworthiness.

CHAPTER IV

DATA DISPLAY AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

Chapter I overviewed the purpose and rationale of this study. Chapter II was a review of the three bodies of literature pertinent to this research: 1) conflict, 2) emotions, particularly that of anger and 3) cultural organizations. Chapter III described the research design and methodology for this qualitative research.

This chapter highlights and analyzes the research findings related to the two research questions of the study: How do women religious within the Congregation de Notre Dame describe and give meaning to their experiences of interpersonal conflict? How do women religious within the Congregation de Notre Dame describe and give meaning to the emotions they experience within conflictual situations, particularly that of anger?

Section One of the chapter contextualizes the data analysis within the parameters of the CND as a cultural organization. This includes a profile of the main characteristics of the CND as perceived by a number of the interviewees.

Section Two of the chapter focuses on the first research question of this study: How do women religious within the CND describe and give meaning to their

experiences of interpersonal conflict? It highlights the CND conflict norms and taboos as the focal lens through which others aspects of conflict are examined, including CND attitudes toward conflict, the various types of CND interpersonal conflict, the causes, meaning and handling of conflict, as well as the effects of handling and not handling conflict. This type of qualitative inductive research provides the opportunity for a rich iterative description of conflict in the interviewees' own words.

Section Three of the chapter discusses and analyzes the second research question of this study: How do women religious within the CND describe and give meaning to the concomitant emotions they experience within their conflictual situations, particularly that of anger? It briefly looks at the different emotions which these women named as concomitant within conflictual situations. Particular emphasis is given to the emotion of anger. Here again the emotions are described and given meaning in the words of the participants.

Section Four looks at the four additional themes which emerged from the data and interface the research questions on conflict and anger. These are intrapersonal conflict, alternate models of CND community, sexuality, and self-esteem.

Section One: Cultural Organization Context

Introduction

As noted in Chapter II, the Congregation de Notre Dame was referred to as an organization because of its obvious goals, structures, and ideologies. After recurring cycles of data analysis, consonant with inductive qualitative analysis, what has emerged from the data is that the CND displays the characteristics of a cultural organization. For this reason, a succinct but pertinent review of the literature on the main characteristics of a cultural organization was carried out and included as Section Three in Chapter II. It is within this framework, particularly the areas of behavior norms and taboos, that the conflict data are contextualized. Since norms and taboos emerge from a cultural organization, I think it is important to obtain a profile of the CND cultural organization as depicted by the CNDs in this study.

Profile of CND as a Cultural Organization

The following profile highlights some of the characteristic ways CNDs describe who they are. This profile helps contextualize the difficulties a number of CNDs have with recognizing and accepting conflict as normal and natural in day-to-day relationships. In

addition, it can help explicate why, as a congregation, many potential growth opportunities inherent in the healthy and constructive handling of conflict are missed.

The CND as a cultural organization has evolved over a period of approximately 340 years. As pioneers in education in North America, CNDs have worked assiduously in such endeavors. How CNDs see themselves today is rooted in the specific mission of education and the religious lifestyle of perfection where uniformity and regimentation, dictated, by and large, through hierarchical structures have prevailed.

The CND mission goal of education has resulted in the advocating of certain values for CND women religious who are educators. What perhaps the CNDs are not aware of, as a total organization, are the powerful ramifications such ensuant values, norms and taboos of behavior have on their ways of being (ontology), knowing (epistemology) and acting as individual members of such an organization.

I noted two (2) observations when CND interviewees talked about the community. First, many individuals prefaced their remarks with a reminder to themselves that they indeed loved the CND, and second, that they were not "betraying" the CND if they made a critical evaluation of it. In these observations, I noted a possible powerful behavior norm: If one loves the CND, then nothing critical can be said about it.

The interview situation, the method of this research, with someone who is an insider (i.e. a CND) may have allowed for a trusting and understanding atmosphere for many incisive and at times, painful things to be said. What follows are the summative statements of how CNDs in this research, see themselves as a cultural organization, a religious community. There would appear to be subsumed in these comments the underlying, unstated and nonetheless powerful, for both good and ill, values, norms and taboos of the cultural organization of the CND. (CND conflict norms and taboos are discussed in Section Two of this chapter.) It has been noted in the literature that values, norms and taboos which remain unstated, retain power (Wicks, 1984; Woodward, 1987). Naming them gives the organization some power and control over them.

In the interview I asked each participant to describe the CND from her perspective. What follows are the descriptors which flowed from the data: intellectual, head people, cautious and non-risktakers, gap between words and actions, unity in conformity, lack of affirmation in the CND, and the question of whether they are an apostolic or monastic community.

Professional. Intellectual Head People. I asked one participant (profession, 1959): "If you were to summarize how you see CNDs, what would that profile be?" After a

very short pause, she summarized the CND with the following: "Professional, intellectual snobs!" She added,

It's beneath us to even go through these earthy stages... There's tremendous fear among us as CNDs, fear of being wrong, fear of not being perfect, fear of criticism, fear of being put down, which speaks of low self images across the board.

Consistent with the CNDs' long history as educators, they see themselves as "head people" from the perspectives of many CNDs. A question that arises is whether the CNDs have bought into the Western dualistic philosophy of either/or? Because of putting such an emphasis on being competent educators, where has that left the whole area of feelings for CNDs? In the words of another CND (profession, 1950): "We're head people. We're educators ... from the... chin up!" (This whole area of emotions is analyzed later in this chapter.)

A third interviewee (profession, 1959) summarized the CND as "professionals and educators", and noted that "a cautiousness ... almost like something of a superiority complex". Because of this, this interviewee added, "we don't jump into the latest fad. There's something more solid" (with emphasis on "solid").

In contrast, another interviewee, (profession, 1947) seeing CNDs as "people who are educated, cultured, refined" intimated that such "qualities" would preclude any kind of conflictual behaviors or "negative" emotions.

Cautious and Non-Risktakers. One participant (profession, 1968) had real problems with the cautiousness she experienced within CND.

I guess I've always considered ourselves cautious as a community. I guess I thought we were kind of on the cutting edge at one point or at least up front, out there on the line.... And I think that has to do with the mission (long, long pause) and taking positions that would be contrary to a more traditional stand. I think that's where I would say we're cautious.

Commenting on the cautiousness she has experienced in the CND regarding taking stands on social justice issues and touching on yet another norm of being perfect at most and being right at least, a second participant (profession, 1985) stated,

We need to be out in the front lines. We need to take stands on issues. We do take stands but they always seem to be second or third or fourth behind someone who's already made a stand on a position.... We don't have the experience so therefore we don't know what to do.

A third CND (profession, 1960), really frustrated with the slowness for change in the organization observed,

Especially as a traditional community we don't move fast.... And I feel that is one of our biggest drawbacks as CNDs.

Reflecting on the possible reasons for such cautiousness in the CND she adds,

Why are we so afraid? What are we hiding? If we get it out, we might be able to do

something with it. Hidden, it can't be touched.

Another CND (profession, 1942) who recently had to leave her ministry in a particular area because the CNDs had closed their convent in the area and permission was not given for her to live in the area with another religious community (intercommunity), sadly commented,

I was just a little bit too early. I didn't understand why we couldn't do it. It always seemed like I couldn't do what I wanted to do.

A fifth interviewee (profession, 1985) reflected on how she feels restricted by the unwritten norms of the CND about taking an individual stand on an issue which the larger community has been more cautious about or disagrees with totally.

If I really believe in something, am I going to state that truth the way I see it or am I going to say it in order to please someone else or to have the general consensus of the rest of the group?... And I think we have to take that risk within ourselves in order to be true to ourselves...

Gap Between Words and Action. A number of CNDs appeared disheartened with the gap between language and praxis in the organization. For some, CND renewal has been talked about and written about since Vatican Council II but they experience a gap between words and action in the lived reality of their lives.

One CND (profession, 1979) stated her concerns about "a sense of bankruptcy in our ability to renew", adding that,

I am looking very seriously for community, but for community where the values, you know, we walk what we talk... I hate all this rhetoric and it's all rhetoric to me. It's rhetoric; chapters can be a bunch of rhetoric (ironic laugh).

Another woman (profession, 1968) speaking about the gap between words and action said,

I think the thing, in terms of that , that at times is problematic for me, is the fact that I see us in terms of our language, being very supportive of that as an option... I see major gaps in terms of our willingness to commit resources and personnel. It's like the language is there, and we're really talking that language, but I see an inconsistency between the language and the practice both in terms of resource commitment and in terms of personnel and the willingness of people to really put themselves there.

Unity in Conformity. Discussing how she has experienced life in the CND, a participant (profession, 1964) had this to say:

Well, I guess I've seen people destroyed in community... My true self was, from the time I entered, and I love the CND and my statement doesn't mean to knock the CND and I'm saying that because that's what it means to me.... And I became, for all those years, like I was encased, like a mummy! And I died! (horror in her voice). I became a mummy but also I was really caged and so my spirit was really put down.

This participant, also spoke, at least from her perspective, of one of the debilitating CND values: unity in conformity.

They talk so much about unity in diversity and that really never was. It was unity in conformity. Conform at all costs.

She added that it has taken a number of years of personal therapy to move from being what she called a "marionette", moving from an external locus of control to her present stance of internal self empowerment and inner freedom.

Another sister (profession, 1943) also referred to this unity in conformity with particular emphasis on the externals. She described it this way:

Even the exterior... Everybody moved as one and everybody did the same thing... It's a wonder we came out as sane as we did.... Everybody had to be the same. You had to walk the same, sit the same. You had to almost think the same and it's just not possible.

Lack of Affirmation. Several CNDs spoke about the lack of affirmation in the CND with the resultant negative effects on individuals' self esteem. One CND, (profession, 1963), reported she had just recently learned that the years of negative feedback she had received in her novitiate training as substitute reader were based on her exceptional reading skills and not the reverse. For years she thought she was a poor reader and that that was why she was the substitute reader, because authority only

gave her negative feedback following each reading incident. She states,

People were never really affirmed. It just never seemed to be the thing. So in different circumstances that you get into, and having people put you down more than people lifting you up, I think that people's self-esteem, my self-esteem fell a few notches and had to be built up, which principally happened by people who affirmed me outside the congregation... And to have to come to realize that it was an institutional problem.

Reflecting on this norm, the sister added that although this is changing somewhat today, there is still a prevailing norm that affirming a sister would give her a "big head".

That would not be humility; that would not be being little or humble. So, even in the whole philosophy and the whole idea of the church realizing that spirituality and psychology go hand in hand.

Another CND, (profession, 1963) spoke about the very same value of "false humility" and lack of affirmation within the CND, noting that her growth has also been stimulated outside the CND. The underlying norm is "I think we have high expectations of one another or demands, unconscious demands".

This same value of lack of affirmation was corroborated by a third CND (profession, 1943). She said,

You know, I just don't like why we can't ever see the good that's there for what that other person brings or does and why there has to be that negative stirring all the time when the effort is made.

A fourth CND (profession, 1944) who thinks the community has improved since Vatican Council II, noted also the general lack of affirmation in the CND and its effect on one's self-esteem. Asked about her self-esteem today, she said,

I have a better opinion of myself, better self-esteem. I mean you got that God works in me as well as everybody else. God works in his own way through me and you have to believe that. But we were not told that. You were never given that opinion, that idea.

Apostolic or Monastic Community? Integral to highlighting the values, norms and taboos of the CND organizational culture is the whole question of whether the CND, in its lived reality, is an apostolic or monastic community. It is important to obtain a focus on how this is perceived by CNDs themselves since it is the main context within the organization in which interpersonal conflicts and the concomitant emotions occur.

The CND, as an apostolic religious community, devoted to the mission of education, states that the ultimate goal of community is union of minds and hearts. In Chapter VI of its Constitutions, this goal is stated as follows: "We center our life in community on Jesus (in a) union of minds and hearts" (p. 61). Chapter VII of the Constitutions, "Missioned for the Gospel", speaks at length about how CNDs are "missioned persons ... who may be called to exercise our apostolic mandate in different

countries of the world..." (pp. 72-73) where the founding charism in the apostolate of education can be exercised. This necessitates, on the one hand, a mobility and a flexibility in living out community life, but on the other hand, a true union of minds and hearts as CNDs carry out their mandated apostolic endeavors.

Differentiating between CND common life and community, one interviewee (profession, 1950) envisions community in the following way: "I'm thinking of Marguerite's words: one in heart and mind. They go together..."

Some CNDs think that efforts have been made since Vatican II to restructure CND closer to its apostolic purposes. They added such changes must ensure that CND community life is more consonant with its apostolic mission of going out wherever there is a need rather than its adhering to a structured and fixed horarium of a more structured monastic tradition. In a monastic community there is usually no outward mission but rather an inward focus emphasized by a structured prayer and community life regimen.

Today, in CND there continues to be a major struggle with appropriate models of apostolic community life that will enhance rather than hinder the mission. Even in the renewed Constitutions (1984), common life, that is a regimen of everything being done together at very specific

times, is explicated as the regular form of community life in the CND. This value is seen as presenting major problems for many CNDs in this research.

One interviewee (profession, 1958) who has had years of working with women religious, including the CNDs, stated unequivocally,

I do a lot of spiritual direction and have over the years with CNDs. There's a major problem with community. I know that from hearing it in a deep context. And I mean a lot of pain involved....

Many women spoke of the struggle involved in attempting to set up new models of CND community that would indeed be more in support of the educational mission of the CNDs.

A second CND (profession, 1960) spoke of the pain and the guilt in her going out for mission, knowing at the same time, she was missing structured and scheduled common prayer and meals with her sisters. Such feels she is just one example of how common life practices are interfering with the different schedules CNDs have today in the varied aspects of their educational mission. When asked for her vision of CND community, the sister focused the difference between community in support of mission and community for community's sake.

Well, I think it is the sense of that missionary visitation spirituality.... I think ... our vision, our emphasis was on community and so the biggest amount of energy was focused on how do I build community and then if mission

followed. People had mission but community was the focus.

A third CND, (profession, 1959) reflecting on the negative aspects of the present CND value of community as common life, stated,

I feel very strongly that in order to grow and to be women in solidarity with one another, we need community in support of mission, in support of our mission...

A fourth interviewee (profession, 1968) very poignantly pointed out the importance of common life in one local CND group in which she lived. Her example demonstrates that common life does not constitute community for her, despite the value placed on it in that local CND house. In fact, many of the conflicts she experienced were related to this very issue. She described the local group as follows:

It was a fairly large group of people in the house, I would say not living together but boarding together, spent some time together, physically, bodily. We were at meals together. Some of us were at prayer together, but my big issue was the television was the focus of attention.

In contrast to the above data, it is important to point out that some of the CNDs interviewed, cherished the value of CND community as communal life. In fact, in their comments, there was a nostalgia for "the good old days". Three such examples emerging from the data, all

came from women who had made profession in the 1940s. One person (profession, 1942) said,

We used to have so much fun together...
and how much we laughed. We don't laugh
anymore.... And always, there was always
somebody home.... (Now), I come in, the
house is empty; I leave, the house is
empty.

Another CND (profession, 1943) spoke at length about how much she valued the CND communal style of community life and her concern about the CNDs losing it. She explained,

I hope that we don't become too advanced
that we become too broken up. I hope
that community always remains a strong
part of us.... I think there's such a
strength in our community, our living of
community.

Yet another CND (profession, 1944) stressed the importance of the communal aspect of CND community. She added,

That's very important, being together.
I've lived in places where it's been like
a hotel. People come in and just sleep
there. They're out, back and forth. You
don't know where they are. Basic for me
would be unity, being together, being
community.

As can be seen from the foregoing excerpts of the research participants' stories, they contend that CNDs struggle and search for appropriate models of apostolic community life are a significant part of who they are. Further discussion of this CND issue is beyond the scope

of this research except as it interfaces with the two research questions. It is significant to note here that any CND in this study advocating community, defined and lived more as communal life, appears to be the number of years the person has lived the CND communal life style. In this limited sample, by and large, those who favored such a value had lived CND communal life for many years. The search for appropriate models of CND community continues as part of CND identity, as reiterated by one CND (profession, 1968).

But I think that we're still struggling with what does it mean for us to be true to who we are and to be true to who we are together.

Summary. In summary, the profile of the CND as a cultural organization, depicted here by a number of members in the organization itself, includes a number of characteristics as highlighted in Table 3.

TABLE 3: PROFILE OF CND AS A CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

- * cultured and refined
 - * educated professional snobs
 - * head people
 - * cautious and non-risktakers
 - * unity in conformity
 - * suffer from a lack of CND affirmation; affirmed outside of CND
 - * suffer from a lack of self-esteem
 - * gap between words and action
 - * apostolic or monastic community?
-

The CNDs are a cultured, refined, educated, professional group of women. As educators, they have definite competencies but as women religious educators, they tend to be head people. They function best from the chin up. A traditional community, they are very cautious and very slow in implementing change despite the rhetoric of recent documents. Because they value having it totally together on any given issue, a number of sisters no longer see CNDs on the cutting edge of important issues. They are afraid to take stands, to take risks. They lag behind a number of other communities and some of lay counterparts on social justice issues.

Living a lifestyle of perfection, there is the underlying expectation, according to some, that CNDs are to be perfect corporately and individually. This fosters unity in conformity rather than unity in diversity. Such a maxim precludes CNDs affirming gifts and talents in one another and it stifles their creative, innovative energies. As a result, CNDs, as a group, would appear to suffer from low self-esteem both individually and collectively. Consequently, a number of the interviewees stated that they have only become affirmed by networking and building "community" outside the CND.

The purpose of this background information in Section One has been to establish the context within which the CND describe and give meaning to their experiences of

interpersonal conflict. This composite profile of the CND cultural organization highlights a number of its strong values, norms and taboos. It is important to note however, that such a profile does not preclude the fact that changes are indeed occurring but such changes take time in a traditional organization. One participant (profession, 1943) who had lived about 25 years in the organization before the renewal of Vatican II, summed it up this way: "I think we're almost human since Vatican II. Before that, we weren't.... I think we're just freer to be a person. We're freer to be available."

Section Two: Research Question One Description and Meaning of Conflict in the CND

Introduction

This section deals with the first research question: How do women religious within the CND describe and give meaning to their experiences of interpersonal conflict? A number of areas flowed from the data related to this first research question, including CND conflict norms and taboos, CND attitudes toward conflict, types of interpersonal conflict, meaning of conflict, handling of conflict and the effects of handling and not handling conflict. Discussion and analysis of each of these areas follow.

CND Conflict Norms and Taboos

In the indepth interview (Appendix B) with each participant, I asked her to share with me what she thought the "Ten Commandments" of the CND would be regarding the experiencing and handling of conflict. Through many cycles of data analysis, the information from this interview question emerged as the focal lens through which all the other research data could be viewed. Initially these data were seen as additional findings or emergent themes, but the more I focused the similarities among the participants' responses, the more evident it became that these "thou shalts" (norms) and "thou shalt nots" (taboos) influenced how the CNDs in this research sample recognized and handled conflict.

These CND conflict norms and taboos are given in detail in Table 4 since they are integral to the interpersonal conflicts CNDs have had within the cultural organization. In fact, such norms and taboos emerged as the focal lens through which to view conflict in the cultural organization of the CND.

Essentially, there were no differences in the norms and taboos given by the participants who would have been "trained" and would have become official members of the CND (known as "profession") at the time of or after Vatican Council II, 1963, and those who were "trained" and became CND members some 60+ years earlier.

In analyzing the data of how the CND women in this research perceived and experienced the norms and taboos regarding the recognition, acceptance and overt handling of conflict within the congregation, there were a number of recurring themes that appeared in the data: harmony is a value, peace at all costs, don't rock the boat, don't ruffle feathers and authority knows best, right or wrong.

Prior to analyzing the data, I assumed that the responses of those CNDs who had entered the congregation after Vatican Council II (1963) and the ensuing renewal of religious life, would have been significantly different from those prior to Vatican II. The data demonstrate, using the verbatim responses of each participant, that my assumption was not accurate. In fact, the conflict norms and taboos shared were essentially identical.

Although steps have indeed been taken in the CND to initiate reform, the question arises, in the light of these data, whether such reform has been simply cosmetic. There have been concerted efforts in the written documents of the CND over the last 20-25 years to move toward a more collegial model of government. This would enable more grass-roots involvement in the organization. There appears, however, to be a definite gap between CND language and actions.

The conflict values, norms and taboos I heard time and again from the CND women I interviewed, included

1) peace at all costs is a paramount value within the organizational culture of the CND; 2) CNDs are afraid of conflict; 3) "good" and "prayerful" religious don't have conflict; conflict is a definite taboo in the CND; 4) CND governmental structures, and the abuse of authority at the local and provincial levels in particular, have led to both the repression and suppression of conflict.

In sum, it appears prevailing norms and taboos regarding conflict are existent in the CND despite any renewal efforts. These are displayed in Table 4 below.

Summary. As I began this research I felt I was not alone in my lived experience of the CND conflict norms and taboos. In the data analysis however, I was quite surprised to see how strong and pervasive these dos and don'ts were across the variables of age, training, profession and lived experience in the CND.

The consonance among the almost verbatim responses of the participants, despite the variables mentioned above, demonstrated to me how strong the CND culture is, exemplifying one of its essential elements that, "it is psychically transmissible, from person to person, from group to group and from generation to generation" (Reuter, 1946, p. 106), and "like life, (it) has unbroken continuity" (Wallis and Wallis, 1940, p. 22). Throughout this research, it became increasingly clear to me that the

conflict norms and taboos of the CND cultural organization impacted how the CND participants recognized and handled conflict.

TABLE 4: CND CONFLICT BEHAVIOR NORMS AND TABOOS

<u>PROFESSION</u>	<u>NORMS</u>	<u>TABOOS</u>
1985	-must be perfect -hierarchy has answers	
1979		-don't talk about conflict
1968	-peace at any cost -be the good nun; obey authority -be submissive/obedient	
1968	-talk in generalities	-don't upset anyone
1967	-avoid conflict	
1964	-peace at all costs -be a nice little person	
1963	-be quiet	-don't express annoyance
1963	-do what you're told -bite your tongue	-don't disagree with authority
1960	-be peacable -avoid any conflict	-don't disturb or ruffle
1960	-authority knows best -peace at all costs -be the nice little girl	-don't express conflict; it will go away -don't get involved
1959	-deny & avoid conflict -be submissive	-don't state/show disapproval of things

(continued on next page)

TABLE 4 continued

1959	-harmony is a value -be cautious/respectable	-don't ruffle feathers -don't rock the boat
1958	-ought to have it to- gether	-don't rock the boat -don't fall apart
1956	-keep the peace	-don't confront -don't rock the boat
1950	-obey authority: "divine right of kings" -keep the peace -be perfect	
1949	-keep the peace	-don't ruffle feathers -don't disagree
1947	-accept everything as God's will	-don't question authority
1944	-obey authority	-don't question authority -don't cause conflict
1943	-keep the peace -ignore conflict; it'll go away	-don't ruffle the waters -don't have an argument
1942	-grin and bear it -do what authority says	-don't contradict
1923	-obey authority, right or wrong	

CND Attitudes Toward Conflict

Gradually, as I listened to and read how the interviewees described and evaluated their conflicts, a

number of attitudes toward conflict began to emerge from the data. Attitudes are basically positive or negative biases, inclinations or tendencies toward particular norms, values, taboos, situations (Reuter, 1940; Webster, 1979). Such attitudes can affect behavior.

Further analysis seemed to confirm that the CND conflict norms and taboos the interviewees reported negatively affected their personal attitudes, behaviors and experiences of interpersonal conflict.

What emerged as the interviewees shared their personal stories about their experiences of conflict in the CND were different attitudes toward the recognition, acceptance and overt handling of conflict. Although such attitudes were in no way static and fixed for any particular individual, yet in my discussion with each interviewee, it appeared that her usual way of handling conflict tended to reflect her more comfortable conflict handling pattern.

It can be assumed that any woman entering religious life has already been enculturated from her family, culture and society regarding the recognition, acceptance and handling of conflict. Such values, norms and taboos can be exacerbated however, in becoming a member of a female religious organization and can influence her attitudes, albeit unconsciously in most cases, toward conflict.

One variable, among others, affecting an individual CND's attitudes toward conflict was that of age: how many years the person was an official member of the organization. According to a number of interviewees, if the person was "young" in the community, overt handling of conflict could have such ramifications as being labelled a rebel, a troublemaker, and in the extreme, could affect the person's permanent membership in the organization (final vows).

From the data, there appeared to be a range of CND attitudes toward conflict from repression to suppression to recognition, acceptance and overt handling. Although repression and suppression have psychiatric connotations, they are not used herein to indicate severe personality problems. Rather repression, as discussed here, is that definite putting out of one's mind or excluding from one's conscious awareness (usually done unconsciously) any undesirable or painful memories, ideas or events related to a particular conflict. Suppression, on the other hand, is an intentional dismissing from one's conscious awareness any undesirable or painful memories, ideas or events related to a particular conflict (Sartain et al, 1962; Smith and Smith, 1973; Swartz, 1963). From the interviewees' personal accounts of conflict, it seemed that repression and suppression could be translated along a continuum, from denial and/or avoidance of conflict, to

ambivalence toward conflict. Denial is seen here as a refusal to believe there is any conflict, a discounting of the situation at hand. For some this could mean repression of the conflict. With avoidance, there is some recognition of differences, but efforts are made to evade these. This could mean suppression of the conflict. Ambivalence toward conflict reflects both positive and negative attitudes. At times, this could mean accepting conflict and handling it constructively; at others, this could mean a denial or avoidance of it. Recognition, acceptance and overt handling of conflict reflects more positive attitudes.

I think it is important to note here that the foregoing attitudes are the constructs I am using in an effort to elucidate the meaning in the interviewees' stories. For the most part they did not use terms such as these. Rather, these attitudes flowed from the data when I looked at all 21 interviews. From my analysis, only two (2) interviewees appeared to deny conflict. Ten (10) interviewees seemed ambivalent toward conflict where at times, they avoided it and at other times, they accepted and handled it. Of these interviewees, five (5) spontaneously shared they were receiving therapy, counselling or spiritual direction to help them with growth issues. (I did not ask this question in the interview.) Nine (9) interviewees in this research

appeared to be able to recognize, accept and handle conflict overtly, even though many of them still didn't perceive themselves as doing so. Seven (7) of these spontaneously reported they were receiving or had received therapy or counselling to help them in these areas. (A number of the participants who shared they had received or were receiving personal therapy related to such issues as conflict and anger added they felt that in the CND, there was a stigma attached to receiving therapy. As a result, there is a taboo regarding personal therapy with resultant secrecy about being in therapy.) These attitudes are displayed in Figure 1.

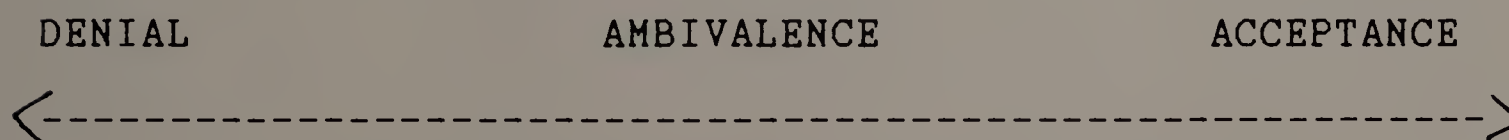


FIGURE 1: CND ATTITUDES TOWARD CONFLICT

Types of Interpersonal Conflict

What follows are examples of conflict iterated in the interviewees' own words which reflect the attitudes just discussed. In the examples chosen to reflect such attitudes and consequent handling of conflict, an effort was made to show that such attitudes are not static for any one person, as indicated by the broken line in Figure 1. Rather, a given individual's attitudes toward,

and handling of conflict may demonstrate a repertoire of management strategies which are person and context dependent. I think it is important, when reflecting on the examples given below, to contextualize them within the approximate time they might have happened as indicated by the year of profession of the interviewee, that is the year the person officially became a member of the CND. Situating the conflict within such time and age variables can help frame it within the growth process of both the individual and the organization.

The conflicts described below, indicating the different attitudes toward conflict, fell into two main categories with types under each of these as shown in Table 5. The two main categories were dyadic and group conflict. Dyadic conflict occurred between peers or between the person concerned and authority. Group conflict occurred between the individual and the group or the group and the individual.

TABLE 5: TYPES OF INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT

DYADIC

peers
authority

GROUP

individual-group
group-individual

Dyadic Peer Conflicts: Denial. Few examples were found in the data that exemplified repression of conflict in its narrow sense of keeping conflict from one's

conscious awareness. Obviously, if a conflict is repressed, it is not one that would be readily reported. Two examples of what appear to be conflict denial are given.

In the first example, the participant shared with me "difficult" incidents in her life, but expressed hesitation about whether these constituted conflict. In one instance, she, as superior, confronted a sister who had been smoking. After recounting the conflict she added, "Maybe this is not a conflict; I'm not sure". Again, when she shared about a conflict with a peer who used to lash out at her unprovoked, she stated, "See, I'm not sure that these things are conflict solely".

A second example is given to illustrate what appears to be initial denial and suppression of a conflict, referred to by the interviewee (profession, 1960), as "swallowing" the conflict. The CND recounted that this conflict happened early in her religious life when a peer would constantly turn the thermostat down resulting in no heat in this sister's bedroom. She shared that her dealing with the conflict reflected her familial enculturation regarding conflict (she reported being an adult child of an alcoholic), an enculturation reinforced in the CND.

And for me, that says a lot by way of contending with conflict, trying to swallow it and trying to be passive or trying not to make a fuss because that's

gonna cause more conflict. So I lived years with that stance and felt that that was virtue.... And I certainly did use that in religious life.... But in order to survive as a young sister I would say, "Authority knows best", and swallow it and ignore my own truth.

Very early on in her religious life this woman seemed to be trying to buy into the organizational norms of peace at all costs and authority knows best in her attitudes toward and handling of conflict. When the injustice of situations would finally get to her, despite all her "swallowing", i.e. denial and suppression of the conflict, then her reaction was one that was out of control.

And I know from early years that there was something inside me that disliked very much injustice of whatever kind and when when a time would come that I felt that I couldn't endure it anymore... I would be very sharp or upfront with it.... It would be outbursts. That would be how I would deal with it.

She reported that she would attempt to deny and suppress any conflict that was present until such a time when it would build up inside her and then there would be an explosion. Reflecting on this conflict, the interviewee noted, "There was no communication, no way to deal with this, so I lashed out at her. And in that case, I'm sure she suffered intensely...."

Dyadic Peer Conflicts: Ambivalence. Six examples of peer conflict flowed from the data illustrating ambivalence, where the interviewees reconstructed and gave meaning to their experiences. In evaluating how they

handled the conflicts, the interviewees tapped into the attitude of conflict ambivalence which affected how they handled the conflicts.

In this first example, a participant (profession, 1963) described how she handled a conflict situation with a peer when she was a young professed.

It was between first vows and final vows. Yah, it was with this person. She was about five years older than I and we were assigned to dishes all the time together. ... And her idea was she wanted to get the dishes over with so she would eat her dinner in about ten minutes and go out there and be banging around very loudly so I would hear it and get out there and do my share of it rather than sit and enjoy the supper. So I didn't confront the situation. I just would do what she wanted and get out there because I felt (emphasis added here) the banging and the loudness was the signal to me to get out there and do my share and so I would. So after doing this for a while, maybe it was two months, I went out there and I went berserk, screaming and hollering at her.

After describing how she handled this conflict situation with her peer, she reflected on how she would have liked to have handled the situation. She said,

I didn't civilly talk to her about it, say, "Look, OK, if you want to wash, leave them all there. I'll dry them even if it's 8 o'clock at night. I'll dry them and put them away. But I'm not gonna come out here".

In giving meaning to the conflict situation, this woman tapped into a CND norm that harmony is a value and the conflict norms and taboos of peace at all costs, and don't rock the boat.

After the conflict situation was over, she was reprimanded by other CNDs who had witnessed the confrontation.

And I remember different people's reactions cause everybody heard it. And everybody coming up to me afterwards just solidified how wrong I was because it was like, "Why don't you like her?" And another one... "You should never have talked to her like that".

In hindsight, this person recognized the CND taboos of don't rock the boat and don't ruffle feathers regarding the handling of conflict in any overt way. She noted that the only admonishments she received were to have more patience with the other sister and ignore her behavior because that was the way that sister was. She stated,

But it wasn't talk about it either.
It was just another way of handling
it which was just as immature.

Constructive overt handling of the conflict was never a suggestion offered to this woman. She said,

But it wasn't a case of, "Why didn't
you sit down and talk it out?" Nobody
really kind of had that solution....

A second example of peer conflict was shared by a participant (profession, 1950) who recounted two similar peer conflictual situations. In the first, a peer colleague, a CND, refused to allow her students to go for a practice for an upcoming event unless they were given "positions of honor" in the event. The participant's handling of the conflict reflects an ambivalence toward

conflict which resulted in a reaction out of proportion to the actual situation.

But I was almost violent in my words, and trembling and that type of thing. And I guess I probably then went up alone and withdrew from where I was and then probably cried.

In the second conflict shared, the participant told a peer colleague, a CND, that it was her turn for a particular school function, not knowing that her colleague didn't want this. The participant's handling of this conflict resembles her handling of the first one cited.

And I didn't know the background and I went to her and told her the pictures were being taken and it was her turn.... We had a confrontation.... And anyway, I don't remember how it went... but I was angry. And I went into the oratory that evening and the night prayer was on. And I called out in the oratory, "I just can't do it" (pitch rise). You know that was the reaction.

Attempting to give meaning to this incident and the pain involved for her, she added,

I guess I left the oratory that time and cried somewhere.... I felt there was a break in the relationship and ... I felt I wasn't to blame and yet I couldn't do anything about it.

Here again, it would appear that the unwritten and unnamed organizational norms of perfection and peace at all costs were "broken" and are reflected in the person's ambivalent attitudes toward conflict. She wanted to repair the breach but when she went to apologize to the other sister, the apology was not accepted.

There would be a whistle or something like this,... a humming, as much as to say, "I'm not listening; I don't care because you don't care about me".

Berating herself for not keeping the peace at all costs and seeing conflict as something that is not "Christian", the sister spoke of her remorse. "Why did I do such a thing?", adding "It took me a long time to really be healed of that".

A third interviewee (profession, 1960) shared a number of conflicts with the same peer, reflecting her ambivalence toward and suppression of conflict. For example, on a particular evening the peer was with the interviewee and the local house leader watching the news. The peer was reading recipes from a cookbook while the newscast was on. At one point she asked the interviewee whether she had tried a particular recipe. The interviewee responded, "No, I really haven't", adding,

And I kept staring at the TV letting her know through my body language that I didn't care one darn thing about what she was telling me. I was watching the news.

Reflecting on how she handled the conflict, the interviewee talked about how she was attempting to ignore and indirectly handle the conflict situation, particularly because the local leader was present, but recognizing at the same time that she was becoming really angry inside.

And I was sitting there ignoring the whole thing except when she did ask me and then my body language was telling her, "Shut up!!" (emphasis added).... And all the time

I'm ready to get up and throw the book out the window or walk out of the room, neither of which I did. But I was really angry that I had to tolerate that!

This same interviewee, realizing she handles conflict situations more covertly than overtly, highlighted a concern about getting out of control if she handled them directly. A CND norm mentioned in Table 4 is always having it together, another way of tapping into the norm of being perfect. A consequence of having it together and being perfect is never losing one's equilibrium, no matter how trying the circumstances. For this participant it resulted in her avoiding conflict with the consequent buildup of tension within her and fear of exploding. Talking about this, the interviewee added,

I can be very verbal and very ugly. I can be very violent (laughing) with my mouth!! Yah, I think I could be very violent. I think I have been on the verge of being physical with her. Yah, I really have and that's what brought me to say, "I've gotta get some help; I just can't handle her. When conflict does arise, how do I deal with it and what do I do with the anger and the resentment that causes me such pain?"

A fourth example of peer conflict was shared by an interviewee (profession, 1964) who had been living with a sister for several years. It vividly demonstrates the extremes to which ambivalence toward overt acceptance and handling of conflict can lead. Because of the degrading ways that sister had treated both visitors and members of the local community, the interviewee shared the following:

You can also be to the point where you're looking at people who are oppressed and you can't take that oppression on. But I remember going to her and she wouldn't even speak back. She wouldn't hear me... And she gave me the silent treatment for all these years. It's just unbelievable.

When the oppression continued even after the interviewee had confronted her peer about specific issues, then there seemed only one recourse to alleviate almost eight years of constant stress. The interviewee continued,

Then I found myself at the point where I actually wanted to eliminate her. I remember I didn't want to shoot her; it was to knife her. And the way I wanted to do it, that at some point I was going to knife her and it was going to be a very quick elimination, a thrust and I knew exactly where it was going to be. I remember feeling that and experiencing that and knowing that and I wanted to do that because I felt for the good of all, I was gonna put her away because I couldn't take any more.... I never wanted to stab her or wanted her to suffer but I wanted to eliminate her.

The interviewee reported becoming physically sick because of the ongoing stress and tension with this peer. Soon after, she left that particular house before she completed her plan of killing her peer.

In hindsight, the interviewee recognizes that her physical sickness was "my body crying out" over unresolved conflict situations. According to this person, a number of years of therapy have helped her deal with her ambivalence toward conflict and her emotions of anger and rage. Personal therapy has helped her learn a repertoire

of skills for a healthier and more overt handling of conflict and expressing the emotions concomitant to the conflict.

The interviewee through personal therapy realizes she has had to recognize and accept her own norms for handling conflict and expressing emotions; she recognizes she has had to become self empowered despite conflict norms of the CND that are not life giving, including, in her own words, peace at all costs and being a nice little girl.

A fifth example of ambivalence toward conflict was recounted by an interviewee (profession, 1942) who shared she did not handle the conflict directly. The conflict was with a peer who was bursar in the house. "She completely dominates the money... so we have no petty cash". When I asked the interviewee, "And what can you do about it?", her response was immediate and definitive,

There isn't a thing I can do about it
because that's the way she wants it....
You're not gonna change her. That's the
way she is; that's the way she's gonna
be and we are not gonna change her so
don't waste your breath...

I then asked the interviewee, "How would you like to handle that situation? What would you like to say?"

I would like to say, "Look here, we are
all grown women. We're all working hard
and we have a right to have what other
houses have" (said in a hurt voice)....
But I don't have the guts to say that.

This interviewee was also living under a CND norm, one that she stated in the following words:

And then you know our training. You don't complain; you don't say anything. You grin and bear it.

Although the interviewee feels and suffers from the injustice in such peer conflictual situations, yet there appears to be no overt confrontation. Listening to her story, her conflicts were very much alive in her as though they had happened yesterday.

Yet the decision is not to confront this person because there's gonna be a battle and she's gonna win and nothing will be solved... (and) I don't have the courage ... or the know-how (to confront).

The last example of peer conflict exemplifying ambivalence toward its recognition, acceptance and handling, is from a participant (profession, 1942) who had a number of conflicts with a peer in her local living situation, but who did not confront the person directly in any of these. In one situation, the peer did her exercises each evening in front of the TV, changing the channels without asking anyone. The participant had a strong reaction to this behavior but she did not confront the peer directly. In the participant's words,

A program will finish and she gets up and turns it to the next program. She never once says, "Does anybody mind if I turn (the channel)?" And I'm sure everybody would say, "No, it's alright".... She'll get up turn to the next thing and I hate some of these stupid programs she watches ... and the rest of us have nothing to say. Anyway, it makes me angry that she has absolutely no consideration for the rest of us.... She dominates the whole place.

When asked how she handled that situation and what she said to her peer, her response was, "I don't say anything". Here again is the CND norm of peace at all costs being lived out.

Summary. The foregoing seven examples of peer conflict were cited to exemplify that the CND interviewees' attitudes of denial and/or ambivalence toward the recognition, acceptance and handling of conflict in overt and constructive ways, seem to be influenced by CND conflict norms and taboos. In a number of the examples given, the interviewees actually stated what CND conflict norms or taboos were operating for them.

Repression of conflict, within its narrowest parameters, that is conflict kept from one's conscious awareness, was not found in the data. Two examples of denial of conflict were cited. In the first, the interviewee seemed to have difficulty naming conflict in her life. In the second example, the interviewee described denial as "swallowing" and what amounted to suppression of it. Such denial of conflict would appear to have definite ramifications on how it is handled. In this instance it resulted in an outburst.

Ambivalence toward conflict was quite evident in the data. At times, this resulted in denial and suppression

of the conflict; at others, this resulted in more overt handling of it.

All of this in no way negates the effects of familial, cultural, and societal conflict norms and taboos. Rather, in most instances for the research participants, it appeared that such norms and taboos became exacerbated within a religious and cultural organization context.

It is again important to reiterate that such attitudes and consequent behaviors are in no way static, but it would appear that individuals in this study who repressed, denied or suppressed conflict may have been operating under definite conflict norms and taboos. It also appeared they tended to have minimal conflict handling strategies. In addition, it seemed that the strategies most often used were the ones learned very early in life. Although these strategies may have been useful then, continuing to use them in adult situations, as the only ways of handling conflict may often prove nonproductive and unhelpful. Finally, there was a sense from the conflict examples shared, that when a CND had a limited repertoire of conflict handling strategies, conflict became one of reaction rather than proaction.

Dyadic Peer Conflicts: Acceptance. A number of the CND women whom I interviewed, shared stories of peer

conflict in which they demonstrated a gradual movement away from attitudes of denial and ambivalence to those of recognition and acceptance of it in their lives. Because of this growth process, their stories of peer conflict sounded qualitatively different. There was a knowledge of the CND norms and taboos regarding conflict. However, these women were in various stages of self empowerment which appeared to move them to a recognition, acceptance and nurturance of their own norms and taboos regarding conflict. In so doing, there was at times, a subtle challenging of CND conflict norms and taboos, and at other times, an open challenging of these in the process of their personal recognition, acceptance and more overt handling of conflict. Next, the conflict stories of seven participants demonstrating such a movement are shared.

The first conflict story shared herein, was specific to a norm in the CND that in order for a sister to take a particular job (apostolic mandate) in a given locale there must a CND community close by in which she can live. As stated earlier, although community is ideally to be in support of mission, in actual fact, it has been the other way round in a number of instances. The interviewee (profession, 1959) related a peer conflict germane to this issue. She began her story by telling me that she had just changed her ministry to a particular area and her choice of CND living situation was based on being close to

her ministry. She stated, "I moved in and I think a lot of the choice was for the ministry and not particularly that local community".

According to the participant, there was a great deal of tension in the house and one particular sister "... was, to a large extent, the source of the tension in the house". Once the participant of this study moved into the house, the particular sister in question attempted to "mold" her to the way things were done there. The participant recounted one such incident.

And I remember one morning after a little while, it was a rainy day, but you get up and you put the shades up. Well I did that and all of a sudden there's a voice.... This voice comes from the central room and it said, "Don't do that. It's raining and it won't do you any good to put the shades up".

The participant shared that she confronted the sister, because with such controlling behavior "I really felt like I didn't have a home". Reconstructing the situation the participant elaborated,

But we had a knock-down, drag-out kind of thing although I didn't physically beat her up (laughing).... And the clincher was she said, "We were here first and you'll do it our way". And I said, "That's exactly what it has felt like".

Sensing that mutual working out of the conflicts in the house was essentially impossible, this participant challenged the CND conflict norms and taboos as she saw them: harmony is a value, don't ruffle the feathers and

don't rock the boat. In fact, she was instrumental in obtaining outside help of third party mediation. (Third party mediation is discussed later in this chapter).

A second example of more acceptance of conflict occurred in a conflict situation with a peer that this next participant (profession, 1960) shared. In analyzing the total story, only an excerpt of which is detailed here, I sensed a movement away from the strictures of the organizational norms and taboos and a movement toward self-empowerment in this conflict situation.

A particular person in the house in which the participant lived was making things unbearable by literally taking over ownership of many common cupboards and their contents. The participant prayed and reflected on how she would handle the conflict. She went to the person concerned expressing what she didn't like but it never went anywhere. She said to her,

I just find this very difficult, like I just don't think that we need to suffer like this, that the cupboards are locked and this sort of thing.... You don't have the authority to do this.

The person would not say anything; she would just withdraw but things wouldn't change. Realizing this, the participant continued,

Knowing I was important as a person and that there was conflict there and I had looked at it and I had tried to live in a Christian way with it, I felt, "How can I go on living like this?... This isn't Christian living at all".

The interviewee felt that other people in the house had experienced the same kind of treatment from this particular individual but didn't do anything about it. Because of all of this, she then looked at what her options were, including leaving religious life.

I mean I'm not living religious life. I might as well get out. But there wasn't a need to leave. There were other options open.

The participant shared that she requested from the provincial leader a change of living situation, a thing not done at that time. The request was granted. In sum, the interviewee remarked that that particular conflict was "probably one of the best times in my life to develop my own sense of my own worth".

In this third example of peer conflict, the interviewee (profession, 1968) contrasted how she moved from an ambivalence and indirect handling of conflict in the first instance with her present efforts to deal with conflict in an upfront way, despite CND norms and taboos to the contrary.

The first instance happened as follows. The interviewee was working in the community room and had the radio on. Another person came in, ignored or didn't hear the radio on and turned the TV on.

Like I was pretty pissed off but what I did was slammed my book, and turned the radio off and walked out and didn't say,

didn't meet it either. I just acted it out.

The conflict was suppressed and indirectly handled.

In her other example, the interviewee challenged the CND taboo, that you, in her own words, "don't upset another person," as she openly recognized, accepted and overtly handled the conflict. In her confronting a peer, she did upset that peer but she knew she had to do it in order to be true to who she is. The peer in question was doing the interviewee's weekly household chore and the interviewee let this go on for a while. She recognized, "This is not helping me or her", so finally, it took me a long time to say,

Listen, your doing this is not helping me because I'm gonna let you do it for as long as you do it because it really, it doesn't bother me. You're not helping me assume responsibility in this house and I know you've got plenty to do.

What ensued was a back and forth because the peer in question was truly upset.

- "Are you telling me you don't want me to do this?"
- "I'm just saying that it's not helping me by taking over my job".
- "Alright, I won't touch this ever again!"
- "Listen, I felt you really feel that maybe I won't do a good job. If there's anything ever, that you feel that I'm not keeping up with, I don't mind, let me know and I'll do work on it".
- "I will never...!"

- "Yah, but I can learn; I can make mistakes".
- "No, I will never tell you whether it's done right or not".
- "Fine".

Thinking about how she handled that peer conflict, the interviewee noted, "I probably felt good about it. I felt bad that I didn't make my point basically. But I claimed my responsibility".

A fourth example of openly handling conflict was shared by a CND (profession, 1958) whose varied ministries have given her the opportunity to live with other religious communities (intercommunity). The conflict was with a peer on this very issue. She was asked by the peer, "When are you coming back to the community?", and the interviewee's response was one of hurt and rage.

But I raged at her, which I had to apologize later, but the hurt in me, it took months to recover from that. "When are you coming back to the community?" (stressing each word). I had never ever imaged myself as out so I guess my rage was good.

This CND challenged the organizational norms and taboos of don't rock the boat and you really ought to be together; you must not fall apart. In giving meaning to this significant peer conflict in her life, the CND noted that it took time where

we had to face and she had to face where I was with that and how she'd hurt me. And it took a while but we did that. We got together and we talked it out.

Feeling OK with her challenging CND norms and taboos, the interviewee highlighted the essence of what is paramount to these norms and taboos within a cultural organization. She said,

Nobody really ever said that. It's just sorta that something was there that I think was part of culture and part of religious culture that said the good religious keeps all of that at bay in a certain way".

As noted throughout this analysis of conflict within the CND, the growth process for handling conflicts in an overt and constructive manner doesn't appear to be linear. In fact, it could be described as a cyclical movement where in some circumstances, one handles it appropriately and in others, one handles it in an unhealthy way.

The fifth example of peer conflict handled was shared by a participant (profession, 1949) who gave example after example of conflict with one particular peer with whom she lived. Two are elaborated on here to demonstrate that learning to handle conflict overtly in a constructive way is an ongoing process! In the first example, the participant left some things outside her bedroom door which she would be needing and using within a few days. When it came time to use them, they were gone. She found them in a place near the room of the peer in question and assumed it was the peer who had put them there. She elaborated,

Sure enough, they were there on the stairs (laughing ironically). So I closed the

door. And of course, to close that door, you really had to slam it. And her bedroom is the bedroom next to this door. But I really didn't care. I was hoping it would make a lot of noise so she'd hear me.

The participant didn't directly confront her peer about moving her things. Instead, she confronted her indirectly by banging the door and hoping she would get the message. This pattern of indirect handling of conflict situations occurred again and again for this participant. Giving meaning to this particular conflict, the participant said, "But in a sense I was glad that I just (had to slam the door).... It just seems that I'm never right". Throughout the interview, in which she talked only about conflicts with this peer, she repeated the theme of "feeling a prisoner in my own home".

In another example of conflict with this same peer, the participant, after many tears and sleepless nights directly confronted her peer about some disparaging remarks she made to another peer about recent happenings in the house. The participant shared this story.

So, I was not happy to hear her speak in that way.... I was awake most of the night, how was I gonna tell her, how am I gonna say it. The next day she asked me to bring her to the doctor's.... And so coming back home, I knew my time was limited at that time (laughing), I said, "There's something I have to say. Last night I was quite angry at what you were telling -----, of all the things that happened. Where is our Visitation spirit?"

She had nothing to say. And then I said,

"And I don't want the silent treatment either".

But I could sense there was gonna be silence unless I said something, so I started to talk about the weather, the trees, I don't know.

Reflecting on how she handled that particular conflict, the participant recognized that what she had done was unusual for her. She recognized that she had handled the conflict differently from her usual management pattern. She realized that she had challenged the CND taboos of never ruffling anybody's feathers and never disagreeing with anybody. She had overtly confronted her peer. Responding to this new awareness, the interviewee added, "I thought that I was being really good to be able to do that because it's not in me to do things like that". For her, this conflict was "a biggie" and the reason she confronted her peer was because of a strong conviction and a wanting to clear the air.

Sharing her stories of peer conflict, a sixth participant (profession, 1959) had this to say about the CND conflict norms and taboos: "Speaking out is not in keeping with how we grew up as CNDs; it's not in conformity with how we've grown up as CNDs to be good girls". After a number of years of personal therapy and learning the importance of "speaking out" for what one believes despite the cultural organization's norms and

taboos, the following example of peer conflict exemplifies how much of a process this is.

A peer had asked the interviewee to help her take some heavy things out of the car and this is what followed. The interviewee said,

Well, would they keep till after supper?
Everything would be cold by the time we'd
get back in.... I could do it when we're
going to church or they might even keep
till tomorrow morning.

They both went down to supper and while at supper, the interviewee noticed that the peer was gone. It was only later that she realized that the peer had asked someone else to help her take the things out of the car. After supper, the interviewee went outside to help her peer only to find that neither the peer nor the car was there. She went back into the house and spoke to her peer who responded,

Well, I felt hurt that you didn't respond
to the request and so I got someone else
to do it. I felt it was kind of controlling.

Initially saying nothing, the interviewee put her coat away but when she went into the community room afterwards she realized, "I was angry; I felt angry", and she confronted her peer.

Well, you might have told me before I
was pawing around in the yard in the dark
looking for you.

Working through this stage of the conflict, the interviewee spent time apart reflecting and praying on

what had happened before going back to her peer. What surfaced for her were feelings of anger and hurt, anger at how the events played out and hurt that the peer found her controlling.

It hurt most that she felt I was controlling the situation when, in effect, I thought she was a bit controlling have to have it done right then.

Out of her time apart and her prayer came two realizations:

I was sorry about my anger in the community room; I did not need to expose her in the community room (but) I wasn't sorry for saying no.

At one point in this reflective time apart, she toyed with telling her peer "that I felt she was a bit controlling" (laughing) but, with time, she decided she did not need to do that.

So when I finally got to her, I could simply say I was sorry about my anger in the community room... and that I didn't want to be controlling and I wanted to let that go, so thank you for facing me on it.

How this participant handled the conflict indicates that, depending on the circumstances, time apart may be needed to become self-empowered, to determine what are one's negotiables and non-negotiables (values, norms and taboos) in the conflict and then to go back and dialogue some more. Once an individual has owned her personal values, norms and taboos regarding conflict then she can make proactive choices regarding these when they "clash"

with those of the CND organizational community. When one can do that, then the conflict can be given some kind of closure. The criterion for such closure in the words of this same participant is "I let it go.... I wasn't burping it and that to me is the test!"

The last example of peer conflict epitomizes self-empowerment and concomitant challenging of the conflict norms and taboos of the CND cultural organization. This CND (profession, 1967) shared the repertoire of conflict strategies that she employed in her efforts to manage a peer conflict. Initially welcomed to the local community by this peer, the interviewee very quickly received "signals ... of what seemed to be cut-offs, rejections...." Reflecting on this very quick change of affability, she concluded that the cause of the conflict was that "of having intruded on one person's territory there" and "my way, my being, my own experience, whatever it was, things seemed to trigger hostility and strong reactions in her".

During their time of living together, the interviewee recounted "it was a very painful relationship and that was very hurtful". From the interviewee's story, it appeared that she relied on personal empowerment as she attempted different behavior strategies in an effort to try and adapt to the needs of this peer. She dialogued with her peer, a dialogue which seemed mutual, but which effected

no real changes. She tried different modes of behavior as explicated in her own words.

None of that seemed to work and I just kept trying. I mean I tried in ways that I didn't think I'd ever been capable of, just a variety of patterns of behavior from imitating her own, in a sense of kind of responding in kind, but doing that, not out of, "I'm gonna get you on this", but just to see if maybe this would bring better results.

I was consciously trying to adapt. And it didn't seem to work and it grew more and more difficult.

At this time there was an emergency in the interviewee's family which necessitated her being with family, and apart from her local community and the peer in question. This time apart gave the interviewee the physical, psychological and spiritual space to decide on what she would do next regarding the peer conflict. She noted, "I had a hard time trying to freely take the time I felt I needed and yet I had to.... In justice..., I felt I had to do something about this".

The interviewee took time to get some counselling on this issue and decided she had done what she could for her peer. "The steps I took were probably inadequate in a sense, but it was as much as I felt I could do at the time". Consequently, she decided not to return to the same local community where the peer was living. She reported that management of the particular personality conflict is ongoing with this peer. "But there's been a

reaching out. And even after we had begun to live separately, we began to address it in letters".

Giving meaning to conflict in her life, using the powerful metaphor of a cavern, the interviewee highlighted the vital necessity of constructive conflict for growth, as well as its paradoxical joy and pain.

And it has meant exceedingly painful conflicts in relationships, things that have pushed me to my limits and gone that several times over so that each time I've come through one of those things I'm at the point now where I almost don't want (chuckling) to stop the present one because it just seems to increase my capacity for another one!! And I don't know, I just feel like I don't have it. But everytime it happens, that's the feeling when it's happening and then you just find that it just creates a bigger CAVERN in you that makes it possible for it to be stronger and deeper the next time. And that gets pretty scary!! So, I can't imagine feeling as I do, on the life side of that without having to go through these, like they're inseparable!

Summary. In the above examples of peer conflict recognized, accepted and handled in more overt and constructive ways, the felt sense of these stories appeared to be an ongoing movement from denial and ambivalence to the stance of more openness regarding conflict. These examples do not suggest a linear movement from attitudes of denial to ambivalence to acceptance because there may be instances where a given interviewee may avoid conflict and others where she openly accepts it. Rather, they suggest an openness to learning that conflict

can be a means of growth, and the challenge that entails. This challenge seems to be much more of a cyclical process but one in which there is more acceptance of conflict and its great potential for growth.

To conclude, peer conflict has been analyzed from the rich iterative descriptions of the participants in this research. Such analysis has been contextualized within the attitudes, norms and taboos of the Congregation de Notre Dame, the cultural organization of which the participants are members. Examples of peer conflict were cited where individuals' attitudes seemed more conforming to the values, norms and taboos of the organization while other examples were cited where the individuals seemed more aware of their own conflict values, norms and taboos, thus handling conflict more overtly and constructively.

Dyadic Authority Conflicts: Ambivalence. Having looked at the effects of CND attitudes toward conflict on how the CND research participants handled peer conflicts, what follows now are six examples of how such attitudes affect dyadic authority conflicts. As the interviewees described and gave meaning to such conflicts, there were the added CND cultural organization norms of authority knows best, right or wrong and obey authority, right or wrong. These particular norms appeared to have a powerful

effect on how some of the participants viewed and handled conflict.

It was significant that more dyadic authority conflicts appeared in the data than peer conflicts. In addition, these conflicts, although they don't seem any different on the printed page, yet they sounded considerably different when the interviewees shared them. As an insider CND, and as the outsider researcher, I sensed a greater intensity of pain, suffering and powerlessness in such conflicts when the interviewees recounted the details; their long pauses, sighs, and at times, tears confirmed this sense. Six examples of dyadic authority conflict follow.

In this first example, a participant (profession, 1942) shared how she handled a particular conflict with authority. The sister was just recuperating from surgery and the superior was making demands on her regarding her ministry that felt almost impossible for the sister at that particular time.

I came out of the corner where she had almost, literally pushed me, screaming and yelling. I said, "You are the hardest, cruellest woman that I've ever met in my life".

Asked to consider how she might handle that conflict today the sister said with a big sigh,

I would have walked out. I would have asked to be transferred. And when I say I would have walked out of there, I would have walked out of community.

A second story of dyadic authority conflict was shared by an interviewee (profession, 1950) who recognized that a strong norm in the CND organization was what she called, "the divine right of kings" when authority spoke. She was really driven to challenge this divine right in a dyadic conflict with her superior. Having had many stressors related to her ministry, the interviewee was just too tired to pick up a sister late at night from a meeting that was several miles distant from her local community. She discussed it with the peer concerned and made arrangements for the peer to stay overnight at another CND house in the area. She would pick the peer up early the following morning. When the interviewee shared this information with her local superior, she said, "Oh, you're pampering yourself; you're gonna grow to be a spinster, a cranky old maid". The following is the interviewee's response,

And this just got me ... so I really got all the anger that I had locked up for years, I let out on her. And I'm not in the habit of speaking to someone, to the superior in that tone. So I said to her, "You don't care if I'm living or dead". And I screeched this at her.... And I felt I was being attacked.... Once I got started I couldn't stop. So that was the sentence, "You don't care if I'm living or dead!"

Giving meaning to this dyadic conflict with authority, the interviewee said that initially she felt remorse about what she had said to authority but, with time, she had a better perspective on it. In her comments

there are suggestions of self-empowerment, even in conflict with authority where strong organizational norms were being challenged.

By the next day I have thought it over enough to say, "I'm sorry for making you feel as you felt, not for saying what I said", and then hugging and asking for pardon and so on.

This CND recounted that the divine right of kings norm was instilled in her at home and then reinforced in the CND to the point that,

if any person in authority spoke that was God and if I didn't follow the letter of that I was disobeying; I was sinning.... So I felt I should submit always to what was said.

A poignant third example of a dyadic conflict with authority occurred for a CND (profession, 1943) when her mother died. "When my mum died, I asked to go home and they said, "No!" And I said, "But the constitutions give me that right". The answer was, "I said, 'no'".

Attempting to give some meaning to this response and the underlying norms of obey authority, right or wrong, and authority has the final word, this sister spoke about her eventual resignation about what had happened.

I was so mad at the time. I could have killed her with my bare hands!! But when it's over, you sift through it and you pray about it and you say, "Who is really being punished by this awful, nasty, uncomfortable feeling within yourself? Let it go".

Recognizing that such abuse of authority could have embittered her, she added,

And by the same token, there are situations that could have embittered me. That's the human condition. I mean that's life. Just because we're in religious life you don't

have things that don't hurt, don't embitter us. But who is really the one to suffer?

In this fourth example of a CND's (profession, 1942) story of a dyadic conflict with authority, she recounted a situation where, with local approval, she finalized summer school plans to study at a particular university where she could get intensive training in her area of expertise, only to have those plans reversed by provincial authority who told the interviewee "we are not allowed to go to non-catholic universities". Since this sister knew of three cases the year before where CNDs went to "non-catholic universities", she had to struggle with the blatant norm of obey authority, right or wrong. The sister backed down and obeyed authority, even lying to save face for authority. The following is her account.

I couldn't go! (pain in her voice)....
So I went to the phone and I told a big lie (to administrations at the university where she had already been accepted). I said, "I want to thank you so much. I am so grateful for this, for your phone call and your interest but my doctor says that I will not be able to pursue these studies this summer".

In giving meaning to this conflict with authority where there was apparent abuse of power, the participant

tapped into the norm of authority has the last word, a strong CND cultural organization norm. When asked what she would do with that situation today, the CND said,

Well, I would go to the superior general. I didn't have presence of mind to go to the superior general. I figured, "Well, the provincial says no, I better not go, period".

In this fifth example of dyadic authority conflict, another CND (profession, 1944) spoke about the harshness of authority and the norm of obeying authority, right or wrong. The incident she related happened about four years ago, when out of courtesy, she went to the provincial leader to tell her of a decision she had made that was totally within her prerogative to make. The provincial did not agree with the decision even though it was a decision passed by a provincial chapter. The interviewee said,

You wouldn't believe the things that were said to me... I was so ashamed I wouldn't even tell some of the sisters what was said to me because I didn't want anybody to think that authority treated you that way.

The sister reported she is still attempting to work through this conflict and the pain and hurt involved. Her spiritual director encouraged her to go back and face the provincial. She has gone back at least a couple of times but she reported these visits as being painful because there was no feeling of mutuality. She summarized her

visits with the following: "But I mean they talk down to you".

When asked how she would have liked to have handled the situation, the interviewee shared she would have wanted to be more assertive. "Well, in hindsight, I would have had everything ready to bump back at her", adding,

What I resented was, I just felt that I didn't deserve this kind of treatment and I still don't deserve this kind of treatment. I mean I love the community. I have given my life to this community... I love the community; I gave it all! I was not two or three years professed; I was over 40 years professed. I was over 60 years old!

The last example of such conflict is one a CND (profession, 1963) had with a superior, early in her religious life. The CND reported that this superior was very oppressive to all the women in the house because authority to her was "power over". The actual confrontation then, was the straw that broke the camel's back, so to speak. The superior was ranting and raving that no one was answering the phone and the sister blew up!

The phone must have rung three or four times and it was not picked up. (The superior) came like a raving maniac down the corridor... "Who's supposed to answer?" She was going on and on and on and I said, "Oh, drop dead!" When I realized what I had out of my mouth, (increase in volume) she was floored!

It took the sister herself many years to get over that

experience because "never in my life would I say that to someone.... We weren't raised that way you know".

Summary. In the six examples of dyadic authority conflict highlighted here, I sensed the norms of obeying authority, right or wrong and authority knows best, exacerbated participants' ambivalence toward conflict. In a number of these instances, participants might start out overtly handling the conflict but would back off from the confrontation in their ambivalence, when challenged by authority. At times, this resulted in explosive outbursts by the participants; at others, resignation. In many, if not all instances there appeared to be the realization by the participants that the power of authority was indeed like the divine right of kings!

Dyadic Authority Conflicts: Acceptance. In the five examples of dyadic authority conflict which follow, the participants' stories demonstrated overt acceptance and handling of the conflicts with authority, even though they were aware of the strong norms of authority knows best, obey authority, right or wrong and authority has the last word. These women seemed to have a strong sense of their identities and their needs even to the point of confronting authority.

In the first example of dyadic authority conflict, a CND (profession, 1963) recounted two conflicts she had had with two different provincial leaders. These occurred several years after she had learned healthier ways of dealing with conflict. The first example was one where the provincial was insisting on moving the interviewee in the middle of the year because of a heterosexual relationship the interviewee was involved in and working through. The interviewee would not agree to the move. The second example was one where the interviewee disagreed on a certain travel policy and told the provincial about it. In both of those situations she was upfront with the two women concerned and handled both conflicts overtly. The participant pinpointed a particular communications workshop as the turning point for her in terms of recognizing the unhealthiness of the CND norms and taboos regarding conflict. She added,

That was a very important educational moment,... a pivotal experience, that made me come to see that some of this stuff was garbage!

A second example of a CND (profession, 1923) who verbalized that she handled conflict with authority differently as a "young nun" gave the reasons why. "The superiors I had were very, very overbearing... I think I would say I had three healthy superiors in all my life". In a conflict with a superior, when she was about 20 years professed, she refused to divulge confidential information

which the superior insisted that she share during three hours of "harassment" (she kept the sister in her office on her knees for three hours). In this dyadic conflict with authority, the sister did not give in, despite the threat, "You're gonna stay there until you tell me".

I asked the CND involved whether she would have handled that conflict situation any differently as a newly professed, where she would not have yet become a "permanent" member of the organization (formerly ritualized with "getting one's beads").

If I hadn't had my beads, I would have been afraid that that would have been a deterrent as to not get my beads. Are they going to send me home?... I don't think I would have handled it. I think I would have been more afraid... Authority at that time was the big... You had to obey and we knew that.

This third example was shared by a CND (profession, 1979) who detailed at length her ongoing conflict with provincial leadership regarding the violence done to her personal integrity through harassment by a person the community had placed trust in. At first, the interviewee went through great intrapersonal conflict around the issues of denial, buying into the female socialization roles and stereotypes, "Am I crazy? Did this really happen? I better think about this again". She reported that over time and personal therapy, she found her self-empowerment and voice despite efforts in many pockets of community to deny what had happened.

Since then, I went to see a woman therapist who's a feminist, and I've had a wonderful experience of someone helping me build myself up in this experience, name my experience and know that I didn't bring it on!! I did not ask for it! (great emphasis here)

Her interpersonal conflict occurred with provincial leadership when she felt she was not believed and supported.

I'm very frustrated. I feel like I've been in a nightmare I can't wake up from. I've never had this experience before of not really being heard.... I'm completely, utterly, what are the words, baffled, angry, terribly angry, terribly hurt and upset with them....

Attempting to give meaning to both the intrapersonal conflict of naming her harassment experience and her interpersonal conflict with provincial leadership about not being supported, she has looked at several options and has chosen the one of "staying and fighting" for her rights. She shared that having found her voice, she will not be silenced in this conflict despite the many CND norms and taboos she is challenging.

I'm not just gonna sit by and have my truth sacrificed and (provincial leadership) sacrificing their own truth that they know about this guy.... I mean to me, it's a sense of I'm not gonna be passive.

She is quite cognizant of the results of being "young" in community and challenging the system.

My being young in the community would have a lot to do with it, by bitching with another younger person but not confronting the system as it is.

But that's what I can't afford to do because if I do that, I'm lying and I'm staying here for protection ... and I'm not gonna do that.

The cost ... has (been) being called a troublemaker.... But that directness, I think the response to people that are angry

or trying to bring conflict (to the fore), is "you're a troublemaker".

A fourth example of conflict with authority was one shared by a CND (profession, 1968) who obviously was trained in the community post Vatican II and ensuant renewal in religious life. She spoke at length about the difficulty authority has when an individual sister doesn't conform to the norm that authority knows best. Despite such a norm, this woman openly confronted authority. She recounted two conflicts with provincial authority in which she disagreed with decisions each of them made which directly affected her. Giving meaning to the first of these instances she said,

And it would have been a lot easier to say to her, "Yes, yes, I will. I'll do it if that's what you want me to do . Fine, I'll do it". But I couldn't because I felt I wouldn't be true to myself if I did. And I just kept fighting it.

This woman, reflected on the gap between CND language and actions vis a vis mutuality. She added,

I didn't feel good about the fact that she was not being respectful of my judgment or not feeling confident that I knew what was best. I mean I didn't feel good but I felt good about the fact that I didn't buckle under in terms of... "Well, you're the

provincial. If you tell me this is what I should do, then I'll do it.

In the second instance with another provincial, when asked to take on a particular responsibility, this sister replied, "I just can't do that". Giving meaning to this interpersonal dyadic conflict with authority, the sister saw yet again the underlying CND cultural organization norm of authority knows best. She commented,

Again, it came down to the fact, basically what she said to me was if I was obedient and I was whatever, I would do this.... And I think the conflict there for me was her image of me, ... what she thought of me. And that could not outweigh being true to myself. So I just said to her, "I would like to be able to be agreeable but I just don't believe it's the right thing". So I hung in there and it was not easy.

Recognizing, accepting and handling conflict overtly appeared to be this CND's attitude toward conflict, even when it meant breaking very powerful CND norms that authority knows best; obey authority right or wrong. Accepting the reality that breaking such powerful norms was also a taboo, she summed up the CND norms as follows:

So in those situations I guess the part of me that's pleased is to say that if I really believe it's the right thing for me I know that I can hang tough in terms of even facing people in authority who are saying to me, "I know more than you do. I'm right and you're not". If I really believe I'm right, I know I can weather that.

In this last example, a CND (profession, 1956) spoke of how understanding her superior was when she went to her a week after profession to tell her that she needed a

change of assignment because she was unable to do the one she had. She reported being heard by the superior and things were worked out. This sister noted,

It was either tell the superior how I felt about it or I think I would have left the community if the superior had just said, "We want you to continue doing it..." I knew myself mentally, I could have had a nervous breakdown maybe.

Summary. These five examples of dyadic authority conflict, where the participants overtly confronted authority despite the strong cultural organization's norms of obey authority, right or wrong; authority knows best and authority has the last word, present a strong contrast to the previous examples where the participants, in most instances, kowtowed to such norms in their conflictual situations. Many of the interviewees who reported attempting to accept and handle conflict overtly and constructively also reported that they have received or are receiving help with such issues through personal therapy, counselling or spiritual direction. In addition, some of them have attended workshops and conferences and have read about such topics.

In sum, the foregoing analysis of dyadic conflict with authority has demonstrated that a number of cultural norms and taboos come into play here. First, there is the norm that authority knows best, right or wrong. Second, obey authority and say nothing. Third, authority has the

last word. These norms come into play here, particularly when the conflict is set up as a win/lose situation where power is involved. Authority "wins", given the prevailing norms of the CND. People who have challenged the system on such things feel they have paid a very definite price, including their not being heard of wupported, their needs or wishes being ignored, their being called troublemakers.

Individual-Group Conflicts. Three individual-group conflicts surfaced during the recurring cycles of data analysis. In each case, the research participants are the individuals involved in the group conflicts. It is important to clarify such types a bit more.

In these data, although an individual may have a conflict with a group, or a group with an individual, what usually ensues is that such a conflict evolves into a dyadic conflict between two group members or between the group and an individual. If there is a designated leader in the group, that person may very well be part of the ensuing dyadic conflict.

In the first instance of individual-group conflict, the interviewee (profession, 1959), appointed to a provincial ministry, with definite ramifications for the evolution and expansion of the organization, confronted the provincial leadership group about what she perceived as their lack of indepth support for her mandate.

I spoke for an hour and a quarter in anger. ... What I said I needed to say.... I laid it on and I said, "Sure you've been behind projects; you've stood behind me money-wise, but there's another step".

In the middle of it, ----- said, "Can you tell me what you really want?" I said, "Someone else try; I've been talking for an hour and it's not clear yet".

Giving meaning to this conflict, the participant reported going through a great deal of guilt about speaking to the group in anger. The group norms of having poise and having it together were broken and this person had to come to an internal recognition and acceptance of confronting with a just anger. Reflecting on this, she summed up the CND cultural organization norm with the following:

It's beneath us to even go through these earthy stages, what I call earthy stages, and it's debasing... not having poise!

The next example of an individual-group conflict, shared by a CND (profession, 1960) detailed a conflict in which the individual confronted the group about the justice issues related to shoddy work done for them. Her perception of the experience was one of not being heard regarding taking steps to have things rectified. She stated,

And the whole sense of not being able to get a voice, living in this house... We had talked about it in community. We had house meetings on it....

But there's just that whole sense of authority and fear.... It's power; it's fear. It's a fear of offending, fear of anything being published in the papers with their company....

Realizing she has taken all the steps she possibly could in confronting the group about this issue, she added,

I just feel this has been a very painful conflict. But the only way I feel I can

live with it is I have spoken my truth and I have no more power.

She crystallized the personal meaning she has been able to give this conflict with the group by tapping into the CND cultural organization's norms regarding conflict:

There's peace at all costs and they're not confrontative and they're not going to be. And it's just so passive and so pretty...

The last example of individual-group conflict demonstrates how a CND (profession, 1959), a member of a community decision making group, chose to handle a particular conflict she had with a group member. Since the behavior of the individual group member had ramifications for the whole group, the study participant was in personal conflict about it.

At the end of a particular meeting, the group was asked to individually reflect on and evaluate the meeting. The CND research study participant became aware of a particular behavior pattern of a group member which she sensed, thwarted, and in some ways, controlled discussion in the group. Because it was the end of the meeting, this CND decided not to confront the individual at that time. Giving meaning to this conflict she noted,

It was the wrong time just at the end of the meeting, but besides that, even if it were earlier in the meeting, it would have opened up such tension and such a can of worms, but you choose your battles.... I realized I couldn't say it because it would have been destructive. And I think, I guess maybe, that would be something I would operate out of: if it would be constructive I would stick my neck out....

I mean I might bring it up two months from now (chuckling), you know what I mean, like when I see it happen again...

Summary. I think the small number of individual-group conflicts in the data, where an individual overtly handles conflict in the group, is consonant with the lived reality of my experience of what happens in the CND. For example, many local groups of CNDs have what is called the monthly house meeting, a forum for addressing common issues and concerns. Rarely, does anyone bring up anything confrontational. If it happens that someone does bring up a particular issue, it is usually not handled there. It is denied or avoided in some way. If it does get handled, this usually happens in dyads outside the larger group where CNDs seem to be more comfortable.

Besides the conflict norms and taboos that are operational within the group, I think there is also the real fact that in religious life generally, and a number of CND local houses specifically, there is a preponderance of introverts, people who seem to function better on a

one-to-one rather than in a group context. This is evidenced by the results of the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator, which CNDs in a number of houses have taken. For example, in a house where I was one of 12 CNDs, when we did the Myers-Briggs, there were 10 introverts and two (2) extraverts. My discussions on this topic with other CNDs corroborated these findings. Beyond the scope of this research, nonetheless I think a preponderance of introverts in a group can potentially play a role in attitudes toward individual-group conflicts.

Group-Individual Conflicts. Only one example of this type of conflict was identified in the data analysis. The criterion for this type of conflict was that a study participant be involved in the conflict (peer or authority) as either the individual or one of the group members.

The conflict was one in which a group was in conflict with the local superior about the health care of two ill community members. The interviewee, (profession, 1985) talked to the local superior about taking some preventative steps regarding the women concerned. When the superior's response was wait and see, the interviewee concluded that she was too enmeshed in the situations to carry out any objective measures. The interviewee talked

with other local group members and two of them called a house meeting in the superior's absence to discuss the situations. The interviewee continued,

And we all came to a consensus that something had to be done. And then we met with the superior as a group and said, "Something has to be done", and she really flew off because she felt that we were going above her. At the same time she was not in the position to make an objective decision because she was involved with the two people that were sick.

The next phase of this conflict became a dyadic conflict with authority, in which the superior confronted the interviewee about the house meeting.

- "Well how come you did this?"
- "I really felt that because of the situation something had to be done".

After this clash in which the superior was quite upset, she came back to the interviewee a few days later and apologized.

- "I really blew it didn't I?"
- "No, you didn't; you were too much involved in it. I was sort of on the outside".

In sum, the point here is that in this group-individual conflict a cultural norm had been broken: authority knows best. Only one example of this type of conflict was found in the data where the group overrode authority. I think this demonstrates well the attitudes of denial and/or ambivalence toward conflict generally, and the particular

reluctance to challenge authority in any such group conflicts.

Summary

To conclude, the foregoing discussion has focused on dyadic and group conflicts, the two main types of interpersonal conflict emerging from the data. Dyadic peer conflicts and dyadic authority conflicts were both discussed within the attitude parameters of denial, ambivalence and acceptance, particularly the latter two. The three individual-group conflicts and the one group-individual conflict flowing from the data were also cited and analyzed.

Although the data confirmed ambivalence as a prevailing attitude toward conflict within the CND research participants, this ambivalence was exacerbated in conflict with authority where there are the prevailing cultural norms of authority knows best; obey authority, right or wrong; authority has the last word.

These data evidenced examples of CNDs who spoke about their ongoing growth in recognizing, accepting and handling conflict constructively, both with peers and authority. In doing this, they recognize that they are challenging the strong CND cultural conflict norms and taboos.

Research participants described and gave meaning to the different types of interpersonal conflicts they have experienced within the CND. These have been detailed here using the rich iterative description of their own words.

Meaning of Conflict

Although the study participants gave meaning to their conflict experiences by elaborating on the specific details of cause-effect sequences, the intent here is to highlight another level of meaning which emerged from the data, the meta meaning of conflict. This is a type of meaning which is beyond the obvious surface meaning. It is the kind of meaning that seems to emerge from reflection and discussion of the interconnectedness of the larger issues of knowing, being and doing as related to the significance of one's life.

Underlying any particular actions are one's ways of being (ontology), one's ways of knowing (epistemology), and one's ways of acting in the world. I am not saying this is a linear process, that ontology and epistemology are established and actions follow. Rather, I am saying this is a cyclical process in which one impinges on the other. It has been my personal experience that when I can name my ways of knowing and being and reflect on my actions as part of this process, only then can I begin to make changes in my values, attitudes and behaviors. In

other words, I am saying it is vital to name and reflect on the degree to which actions and behaviors, attitudes and beliefs shape one another.

Conflict Definitions Reiterated. To help delineate conflict at this meta-level of meaning, it is important to reiterate from Chapter II the different definitions of conflict. A major feature about conflict in the literature was that it is dichotomized as either good or bad.

In the literature, conflict is seen by many as bad. To reiterate from Chapter II, "Even though we may admit that some conflict is good, the word itself has a bias toward the bad" (Boulding, 1962, p. 306). Even the etymological roots of conflict, "confligere", to strike together, capture its primary negative definition. Again, as noted in Chapter II, "In everyday language, conflict denotes overt, coercive actions in which two or more parties seek to impose their will on one another" (Bercovitch, 1984, p. 3).

Further negative definitions of conflict include, "mutual hostility between or among individuals or groups" (Nye, 1973, p. xii); "deviant behavior which is seen as disease in need of treatment" (Coser, 1956, pp. 22-23); opposition (Beals and Siegel, 1966); incompatible goals and interference from others in achieving these goals

(Deutsch, 1973; Folger and Poole, 1981; Kriesberg, 1973); and misunderstanding (Rex, 1981).

Conflict has also been defined in more constructive ways in the literature (Benne, 1982; Bercovitch, 1984; Cobb and Dapice, 1987; Coser, 1956; Crum, 1984; Deetz and Stevenson, 1986; Miller, 1976; Scherer et al., 1975; Woodward, 1987). The thrust of such definitions is that in reality, conflict is neither positive or negative in and of itself. It is a normal and natural happening in everyone's life. What one does with the conflict determines whether it is constructive or destructive, positive or negative. In essence, for many, "conflicts are considered bad because they are frequently mismanaged" (Deetz and Stevenson, 1986, pp. 205-206).

CND Meta Meaning of Conflict. Summary definitions of conflict from the literature have been repeated in order to interface them with the deeper level meanings or "definitions" of the study participants. Here the question is, How do women religious within the Congregation de Notre Dame view conflict? Four meta meanings of conflict were distinguished in the data. These are briefly discussed and then the data are presented under these four meanings.

First, some CNDs, spoke about conflict at this meta-level from the perspective of the CND, their being a

member of such a cultural organization. It appeared that the conflict norms and taboos of the CND organization and their own personal norms and taboos were similar.

Consciously or unconsciously, they seemed to have adopted those of the organization.

Second, other CNDs, seemingly recognized what the norms and taboos of the organization were regarding conflict but gave their own norms and taboos. Third, others, harkoned back to the conflict norms and taboos of their families of origin and went from there. Finally, there were some CNDs who reflected, from their perspectives, what changes there have been over the years in the CND conflict norms and taboos. These variations of meta meaning are displayed in Table 6.

TABLE 6: META-MEANING OF CND CONFLICT

- * CND and personal conflict norms & taboos similar
 - * CND and personal conflict norms & taboos different
 - * family and CND conflict norms & taboos similar
 - * CND conflict norms & taboos today
-

CND and Personal Norms and Taboos Similar. Only two examples were seen in the data which highlighted similar personal and CND conflict values.

In this first example, the participant (profession, 1947) epitomized her personal dilemma about recognizing, accepting and giving meaning to conflict in her life with the following: "I guess the way some people look at conflict, I think, maybe we look at conflict in different ways also which is fine". When asked to define conflict she said, " I don't see things the way you do and I hold to mine and you hold to yours". Later after attempting to give specific personal examples of conflict she noted, "See I'm not sure that these things are conflict solely". Analyzing these data, it seemed that conflict was denied here. It appeared that the interviewee's personal meaning of conflict at this meta-level was subsumed under the group norms and taboos of conflict. The participant noted, "... conflict was God's will for us and especially when it came from authority you just didn't question it".

In giving meaning to conflict at this deeper level, where the CND community conflict norms and taboos would be evaluated, this person made a distinction between the CND and the people in the CND. "I've always been able to say, 'It's really not the community; it's a human being.... The community would not do anything like that to me".

In a second example, a participant (profession, 1942) may have reflected an unconscious acceptance of CND conflict norms and taboos in her frank discussion of lack of courage and know-how in handling conflict.

I'm not gonna get involved. I don't want to get into any argument. I have to live here.... I don't have the courage or the guts to confront anybody so I just don't say anything.

There were times when I didn't know how to handle situations or... I just felt cowed.

CND and Personal Conflict Norms and Taboos Different.

Here, eight examples, seen in the data, highlight how CNDs struggle with reconciling their own conflict values with those of the organization.

Recognizing and accepting conflict as normal and natural were paramount to "thinking for yourself", a strong taboo in the CND, according to this first interviewee (profession, 1944). "Obeying the superior, right or wrong" was virtuous and expected, so engaging in conflict was tantamount to "talking back to the superior".

In a second example, a CND (profession, 1943) who distinguished her own personal norms and taboos regarding conflict from those of the cultural organization of the CND, differentiated these with the following, when asked how CNDs handle conflict:

I think we just don't handle it. (We) just pretend it's not there. I think we just let it die in mid air ... If it starts to arise, don't hear it, don't respond, don't answer. Forget it; it'll go away. That's my opinion because you don't really meet much conflict among our nuns.... I think there's a lot of inward conflict... I think there's a lot eating away at people at times over things, situations, jobs given, people chosen over

us. I think there's a lot of conflict. Maybe it wears a lot of hats but I think there's a lot of conflict in our lives.

Contrasting this denial and avoidance of conflict at the organizational level with the meaning she personally gives to conflict she continued,

I think conflict is very necessary. I think it's necessary because I think we could all become very passive and just take whatever comes and I don't think that's good. I think you have to shake yourself up a little. I think if we become too passive we don't have any reaction.

I think conflict kind of can bring life. Yah, I think it can create a zip! It causes you to think and get your wheels turning in your head and work through things. I think it's necessary and I'm sure it's gonna be with us forever!

Giving meta meaning to conflict in the CND, which contrasted from her own, a third interviewee (profession, 1959) noted,

We're not great at handling conflict in general. I'm not real sure that we know the value that's inherent in conflict.... We were to kind of cover up and try to find something good in the whole thing, keep on going. But we missed so much of what that situation held by not facing the conflict in the whole situation.

I don't think there's winning and losing in conflict. I think if we both work it through we're both winners and even if the other person doesn't work it through, every time I stand up in it I'm a winner.

Tapping into the CND norm of peace at all costs, a fourth participant (profession, 1958) noted how easy it is

to buy into such a value. "Basically, I like peace. You know, I'll walk around many a block to avoid an argument". Recognizing her own growth in this area she added,

Yet, more important to me that that is the peace that comes from truth. I could not be a party in this day and age to putting things under the carpet. I would really want to dialogue. I would certainly want to give and take, but compromise truth, no.

She sees that in CND, conflict is a zero-sum game with winners and losers, recognizing that "the silence of our past lives covered it, protected us..."

Today however, I think conflict is absolutely essential to all of us in church and politics and religious life, community in order to grow.

A fifth participant (profession, 1967) never once referred to the group conflict norms and taboos or the influence of these on the meaning she gave conflict in her life. Rather, right from the outset, she spoke of the importance, the necessity and the concomitant pain of conflict in her life. Recognizing the importance each conflict can have in preparing her for the next conflict, she captured such meaning as follows:

I almost don't want to stop the present conflict because it just seems to (chuckling) increase my capacity for another one and I just feel I don't have it. But everytime it happens that's the feeling when it's happening. And then you just find that it just creates a bigger cavern in you that makes it possible for it to be stronger and deeper the next time and that gets pretty scary.

When I feel the pain I know I'm alive and it sure means that the joy is that much more intense and powerful because of it (said in a very soft voice).

Aware of the necessity in her own life to deal with conflict in an upfront manner, a sixth participant, (profession, 1949) contrasted her conflict norms and taboos with those of other CNDs. She remarked,

I see people in conflict who are having a tiff and who ... don't express them with a person. It's as though everything were honky-dory!... When others sort of butter her up and... they're having the same problem I'm having, then that's where I don't understand.

Referring to her novitiate training as a time of "brainwashing", this seventh participant (profession, 1963) stated, "You were supposed to just allow yourself to be a doormat". Struggling with such a philosophy when actual conflicts occurred, she said to herself,

No, I'm not supposed to act like that; I'm not supposed to stand by quiet and be smacked in the face all the time, have people take advantage of you. I don't think that's right. But I heard it for two years. I guess I allowed it to brainwash me.

In this last example, a participant (profession, 1979) shared her grave concerns about the CND: "We have such a sense of bankruptcy in our ability to renew".... When she handles conflict openly, she reported, "I upset the patterns of denial in the house", adding that she has then has to consciously deal with her own guilt, resulting in such self recriminations as, "I'm a bad girl! I'm a

bad CND. I don't pray enough because I'm upset by things". Recognizing that the CND cultural organization conflict norms and taboos are strong indeed, she shared that she has to consciously safeguard herself from buying into these.

Family and CND Conflict Norms and Taboos Similar.

The stories of five participants below reflect the consonance of meaning these CNDs see between their familial and community handling of conflict.

Highlighting the avoidance pattern related to conflict she learned at home and had reinforced in the CND, this first interviewee (profession, 1985) used the metaphor of a garbage can to illustrate how she was taught at home to deal with conflict and how that has been reinforced in the CND.

So therefore, the conflict, I would bury it.... I just said, "To hell with it". I used the vision of a garbage pail with a cap on it. You take the top off, put the conflict in, put the cap down. That's sort of my vision now in trying to empty that garbage out!

Giving meaning to conflict at this meta level as a CND, a second participant (profession, 1968) first shared her initial formation around conflict:

As a child... I would have sat on a lot of it because, in my mind, the better thing to do would be to make excuses for people and to swallow it.

As a CND, she see this conflict norm further developed:

From my community experiences, people I've lived with have really internalized the "good nun" image.... I think conflict is not something that we do well dealing with.

Naming the avoidance issue of conflict in the CND, this same participant noted that in CND conflicts,

There were winners and losers, but it just seems from my perspective, that I always feel if the conflict is gonna be resolved, both people have to be able to say in some ways, 'I'm responsible', at least to acknowledge to some degree, culpability because I think if there's a conflict, it's not usually all one person's fault.

A third participant (profession, 1960) shared that as an adult child of an alcoholic, her norms and taboos regarding conflict were initially learned in her home environment. There, denial and avoidance of conflict were givens. As a young religious, denial and avoidance of conflict were reinforced within the CND.

But in order to survive as a young sister, I would say, "Authority knows best" and swallow it and ignore my own truth.

Gradually recognizing the growth potential inherent in conflict, this same sister had to deal with the reality of the CND norm regarding denial and avoidance of conflict:

I felt other people in the house had experienced the same thing I was experiencing but didn't do anything about it.... But I knew I had to break that pattern because I was more acceptable not only in my home but in religious life to be the nice little girl.

Like it is so glorified in the community that I just feel like spitting saying, "Go to hell! We are not being honest at all. This is a messy, rotten situation and I'm not gonna sit pretty in this!"

It was only much later in her life that she was able to give any constructive meaning to conflict. This woman felt she really only came to grips with conflict and its meaning through personal therapy. She then reflected on what her therapist told her:

See, that's what my therapist (told me). It's not an either/or all the time and I do think that that is it. And I think that just getting that piece of information that there are not winners and losers, maybe compromise, and all the differernt ways...

Seeing herself and her background as part of the problem of not facing conflict in the CND, a fourth participant (profession, 1968) had this to say.

Like even in terms of this topic of conflict. I can look at the community and say, "Well, the community doesn't face conflict". But, I'm also at the point where I know until I can face conflict, the community can't face conflict.

She recognized very well how she had been trained in her family regarding conflict and that she had such values reinforced in the CND: in conflict you were either right or wrong; there were winners and losers.

Well, somewhere in my gut I wanted the experience of being right!! (laughing). I think there's a real propensity for me when I'm in conflict, when I'm having an argument in my family... to come out right!

Paralleling this to the CND, she added, "I think that permeates a lot of (our) information.... We just don't face the fact of the problems within the group..."

In this last example, a CND (profession, 1960) speaking about the meaning of conflict in her life, recognized a consonance between the denial and avoidance norms in the congregation and how she was reared at home, where the norms were speak when you're spoken to and children should be seen and not heard. Similarly in the CND, particularly in her younger years before she became more self-empowered, she complied with such norms. "I don't ever remember being assertive or aggressive or speaking out. I just tolerated it".

CND Conflict Norms and Taboos Today. Five research participants, in giving meaning to conflict in the CND at this meta level, thought that a gradual shift was occurring, a movement from seeing it as totally negative with winners and losers to seeing its positive aspects.

Asked whether CNDs avoid conflict, this first interviewee (profession, 1950) responded,

I think we do to a certain extent...
There's not the fear that the conflict will arise. There's not the same fear. Perhaps I'm saying there will be fewer conflicts because more are able to look at all sides and are more able to accept each person and are more willing to bring up subjects that they know everyone will not go along with at first.... I think a lot are handling it better.

A second participant (profession, 1963) said that in the past, conflict in the CND was avoided, ("We didn't have any!"), or it was seen as having winners and losers, being right or wrong. She added,

I wouldn't say so now.... I think now we respect people's (opinions). I might be in conflict with you. I might get heated with you but I would respect (you). It's a healthy conflict.

Reflecting on the meaning of conflict in the CND, a third participant (profession, 1956) summed it up this way.

Well, you didn't confront. Ordinarily, you didn't confront someone else. This was in the past, not that we easily confront people now but I think you confront people more easily now than you did in the past.... And I would say I do find it easier to go to someone to talk about something that might have bothered me than I would have, say, 25 years ago.

In this fourth example, a CND (profession, 1923), stated that the conflicts of today are "pinpricks" in comparison to those she experienced years back. She continued,

(Today), I think the sisters are more open. I think they're more experienced in conflicts in ... their daily work ... I think in the years gone by it was a closed book. It was the superior general. They believed in this obedience, obedience from the top down. That was it. There wasn't an openness of speaking... no dialogue.

Contrasting her approach to conflict as a young religious with today, in this last example, a CND (profession, 1963) noted,

As a young religious, I remember I didn't really have any conflicts with people in the sense that I would just let it be inside of myself rather than approaching people

I think today there's a lot more handling in a mature way conflict situations because people have had a lot of training and have come to understand themselves and their emotions and all that through different kinds of workshops and reading that people have done.

Summary. There is a broad range of ideas on the meaning of conflict in the cultural organization of the CND. In this iterative slice of data on the meaning of conflict at this meta-level, where there is an interfacing of attitudes and beliefs with actions and behaviors, the foregoing descriptions have demonstrated the full spectrum of conflict as positive and conflict as negative, with some ambivalence inbetween.

From these data, CNDs show an ambivalence toward conflict with a tendency to give it negative meaning for growth in their lives. It is a zero-sum game with winners and losers. Hence, there is the perception that conflict and its ensuant confrontation, means being out of control. It is important therefore, to deny it, and if this can't be done, then at least to avoid it. The degree of denial, ambivalence, or recognition and acceptance depends on the family background, educational experiences, psychological development as well as the depth of CND enculturation.

In sum, the meta meaning of conflict in the CND was discussed from the four meta-levels of meaning which emerged from the data: 1) CND and personal conflict norms and taboos similar; 2) CND and personal conflict norms and taboos different; 3) family and CND conflict norms and taboos similar; 4) CND conflict norms and taboos today.

Handling of Conflicts

A number of terms are used when referring to the handling of conflicts including avoidance, collaboration, accommodation, confrontation, compromise, resolution, and management. In the literature resolution has more the connotation of absolute closure where both sides have all their needs, expectations met. On the other hand, conflict management connotes more of a give and take, a mutuality in the handling of the conflict. Each side can live with the outcomes even if they are not what would have been preferable. There is more of a stance of openness and continuing the conversation. The nuances between conflict resolution and management are subtle and not well understood by many people engaging in or talking about conflict. In fact, the two terms are used interchangeably when referring to the handling of conflict. Having made the distinction between the two, the following discussion will focus on the handling of

conflict within the distinctions emerging from the data: confrontation and avoidance.

It was found in the analysis of the data that very seldom did a CND handle conflict solely by using one strategy. The various ways interviewees handled conflicts are now discussed, beginning with those examples where interviewees made ongoing conscious efforts to handle conflict upfront, and followed by the accounts of those interviewees whose preferred conflict handling patterns demonstrated more avoidance strategies. Those interviewees whose conflict handling patterns were a combination of strategies are highlighted. Finally, third party mediation as a way of handling conflict is discussed.

Confrontation

One of the ways of overtly handling conflict is confrontation, a word, which in itself, has negative connotations for many. (In one interviewee's definition, confrontation means being out of control.) Many euphemisms were used in the data for the overt handling of conflict including "dialogue", "talking it out", "sharing our differences". What follows are four examples of interviewees' interfaced descriptions of their actual conflict handling patterns and preferred patterns.

Integral to their stories are the criteria they gave for the overt handling of conflict which included the need to talk about it, the sense that their truth was at stake, the courage to talk about the conflict, the conviction about an issue and the feeling of trust where they could confront. To help focus the criteria for the overt handling of conflict as well as the actual and preferred conflict handling patterns, these headings are underlined in each example.

In this first example of confrontation, the interviewee (profession, 1967), stated that the criterion for handling conflict "was one of those times when I felt we gotta talk". She was cognizant that conflicts were difficult for her, noting, "I sure don't seek them out. I sure have spent lots of time avoiding them, trying to get away from them in one way or another", but she recognized at the same time, the potential growth in them when handled constructively.

This woman reported working very hard at being proactive in handling conflict; in her story, there was basically no difference between her actual and preferred conflict handling patterns. In the handling of the main interpersonal peer conflict which she shared, she tried a number of strategies to manage the conflict and when none of these helped, she then made a proactive decision to leave the situation. Her constant focus was to separate

the behaviors of the person in the conflict from the person. "I often experience such a deep desire for us to be able to not have our relationships affected by issues... those things need not affect our relationships with one another."

Her desired conflict handling pattern is the following:

I would like to do it directly, simply, nonaggressively, lovingly, not let things build.

Aware of the need to learn conflict management skills and having availed herself of different aids, including personal reading, reflection and counseling, she still emphasized that learning to handle conflict is only learned by going through conflict! Learning the skills to handle conflict doesn't take away the struggle.

I can't conceive intellectually or any other way a resolution to situations like that one other than the struggle through them.

The criterion for handling conflict for the next interviewee (profession, 1958) was that of truth.

Basically I like peace! I'll walk around many a block to avoid an argument and yet more important to me than that is the peace that comes from truth.

As a woman who has been involved in personal, psychological and spiritual development both for herself and others, she manages conflict by confronting the peer or authority concerned. She sees it as a mutual give and

take, something in which both have responsibility. In her words,

We got together and we talked it out...
But I'm willing to assume my part of that
responsibility but I would like to hear
that it's mutual.

Reflecting on an ideal way to handle conflict, she
said,

I need to get back to the situation, ...
to dialogue... and deliver that truth.
... I try to be gentle. I try to be
timely with it.

The criteria for initiating and handling conflict, as
shared by a CND (profession, 1965) in this third example
of overt handling of conflict were the courage to
confront, a trusting relationship and the importance of
the issue.

Sometimes, you just don't have the
courage to say to the person what it is
you're thinking.... If you have the courage
to be the one to approach the person, I think
it takes a lot of courage and it might take a
lot out of you physically to be able to do it.
Hopefully I could do it and not be a coward.
But it's easy to be a coward and put up with
anything and just live in the situation.

Because I really know the people... I think
it's easier to be able to talk to someone
about whatever the difficulty is.

If I think about it and it kind of annoys me;
I'm uncomfortable with it, then I would go to
the person. If it's something that's minor
and the other person has no idea what they
said or did, cause I'm sure I do it to them
too, I don't make a big issue of it.

Her usual way of handling conflict today is to go the person and talk it out.

I do find it easier to talk to someone about a situation instead of just ignoring it and letting it build inside. (If) it doesn't seem to be major, I just let it go.

When asked about the ideal way for her to handle conflict, she said, "Hopefully I'm doing it".

The ideal thing is to approach the person that ability to talk, the way it's phrased, the way you say it that it can be received in an open mind...

In this last example of overt handling of conflict, the criterion for initiating and handling it for another study participant (profession, 1943) was her strong conviction about a given issue.

I imagine I would battle for what I thought would be right, what I would think or at least present a side. If it's over-ruled, that's OK.... But I would hold out if I thought I were right.

Asked what her usual conflict handling pattern is, she shared,

I usually would go to the person. I would say what I felt and then if they could present me with something that I wasn't seeing or another side of it, I could bend.

Although she handles conflict constructively, from the examples she gave in the interview, her personal perception of how she handles conflict is, "I don't think I handle conflict well". Her preferred style of handling conflict was not much different from the way she does it presently. "I think I pretty much handle it the same

way". Stating that she doesn't like conflict, she handles it immediately with the acid test of closure that there are no residual strings hanging, so to speak.

I have to be very quick about it because I may not do it. I might have the courage to do it right this minute so I do it because tomorrow I may not have the courage and I may not do it.

I make it more of a give and take kind of thing.... I just like to be able to solve it right there when it occurs, to mutually settle it, so that there's no bad taste in my mouth and I don't have any reason to believe there would be a bad taste in hers.

Avoidance

From the data, avoidance, as a way of handling conflict, emerged in five variations. One is an indirect handling of the conflict but in a passive aggressive way. A second is avoidance in cynical resignation that is essentially not constructive for either party. Another way of dealing with the conflict is avoiding it for a period of time and then reacting in an explosive outburst. A fourth way of dealing with conflict is avoiding it in order to protect oneself. A fifth type of avoidance is one of preparation in which the individual removes herself from the conflict for a period of time in order to go back at a later time when she is more centered and ready for it.

Indirect handling of conflict may then be a constructive way for some to handle conflict, again

depending on the variables at hand. Avoidance of conflict for one person may be part of her pattern of going away and preparing for a more overt handling of the altercation. It may also be a way of protecting oneself from a precarious situation. For another, it is a denial of the conflict, a head in the sand handling, so to speak.

Passive Aggressiveness. Two examples of passive aggressiveness are shared here to illustrate its ramifications.

One CND, (profession, 1968) spoke of her actual handling of a conflict in an indirect passive aggressive way:

Like I was pretty pissed off, but what I did was, slammed my book, and turned the radio off and didn't say, didn't meet it either you know. I just acted it out!

Reflecting on how she would have ideally liked to handle that conflict, the sister responded by sharing an example of how she overtly handled a conflict by confronting the peer involved, even though it took her almost two months to get up the courage to do so.

- "You know, it has taken me a long time to come and say this to you. It's a very simple thing and it sounds like I'm saying it simply, but it's taken me a long time".
- "What did you think, I was gonna bite your head off?
- "No, it was because I was feeling very bad and I didn't want to upset you".

Another CND (profession, 1949) shared her actual indirect handling of conflict with the following:

But no, it's notes. And that's the only way it seems, that she can approach people. And I'm in that category because she never approaches me.

The other night... I wrote a note, "Please do not move!" (laughing). And I guess I was just even happy to be able to play her game, and yet I don't want to stoop to that level.

When asked how she would ideally like to handle conflicts with this peer, she sadly observed,

I don't know how I could. I don't know how I could and I don't know how I would want to. I'm beginning to attack her or she feels I am or I feel I'm attacking her.

I guess I don't want to put myself down to that level of not talking. I'd rather keep talking, keep the avenues open... because I want her to know if she's willing, I'm willing.

Cynicism. An actual conflict handling pattern noted in a number of the participants' stories was that of avoidance in resignation, cynicism. One such example is related by a participant (profession, 1942). Having put down the shades in the sitting room earlier in the evening, after a peer disagreed with her that they needed to be down, this participant noted when she returned a short time later that her peer had put the shades up. Her response was the following: "How stupid, how picayune, I'm not gonna get involved".

When asked how she would have preferred to handle that situation, she said,

I felt like saying, "How stupid, how stupid!" But I don't have the guts to say that. I don't want to get into any argument; I have to live here.

Here it would appear that a key factor in how the conflict was handled was the person's image of herself.

Well, I always say to myself, I don't have the courage or the guts to confront anybody so I just don't say anything.

In contrast to cynical resignation, a number of CND participants shared they chose to be proactive in conflict situations even though they had many situations in the congregation that could have embittered them. This is beautifully summarized by one interviewee (profession, 1943).

I'm sure we all... had big things that could have embittered us. That's the human condition. I mean that's life. Just because we're in religious life we don't have things that don't hurt, don't embitter us. But who is really the one to suffer?

But I think if we pray and I think if we learn that compassion, and as we age, if we're open, then something will happen inside of us and we don't have to be cynical.

Explosion. A third way of handling conflict through avoidance is the initial denial and/or avoidance of the conflict and then the eventual outburst. With this kind of nonhandling of the conflict, tension seems to build,

resulting in an explosive reaction for some people. The following six examples illustrate such an avoidance-explosion pattern, a pattern that was commonly found in the data.

Reflecting on an ongoing conflict she had with a superior, in this first example, a CND (profession, 1942) shared how she actually handled the conflict.

And that particular superior, she nearly did me in. She nearly broke my spirit. And she drove me into a corner (laughs), where I came out fighting like I never fought before. I screamed and I yelled and I ranted. It was like the last straw.... And I remember I just blasted her.

I came out of the corner where she had almost, literally pushed me, screaming and yelling. I said, "You are the hardest, the coldest, the cruellest women that I've ever met in my life".

A second CND (profession, 1960) recounted a peer conflict which she avoided until she actually handled it by exploding.

It would be outbursts, that would be how I would deal with it.... When I think of the outburst time, I think of a sister I lived with.... She walked and turned the thermostat down and this kind of thing. And I was freezing...

There was no communication, no way to deal with this, so I lambasted her. And in that case, ... it was a very messy way to deal with it.

A third example of avoidance-explosion as a way of actually handling conflict was shared by a CND

(profession, 1963) who finally exploded at her superior, whom she felt was abusing her authority.

I had no power so you lived in the situation for survival... The superior came like a raving maniac down the corridor.... So she was going on and on and on and I said, "Oh, drop dead!"

A fourth example of conflict was shared by another CND (profession, 1960) in which there appeared to be a lot of passive aggressiveness and avoidance of conflict, with an eventual culmination in an explosive diatribe. How it was actually handled is seen in the following:

- "I will do the bulk of the next meeting" (in a loud voice).
- "Yes, don't worry about it; we'll talk about it later" (in a whisper).
- "I mean it!" (loud voice again).
- "Would you stop making such an issue of this thing? We can discuss it later" (in a whisper).

The back and forth continued between them and escalated once everybody else had left the meeting.

- "Don't worry about the meeting. We'll take care of it together".
- "But I want the bulk of the meeting!"
- "Well take it!! I'm sick of this shit and you make me sick!"

Concerned about how she "stuffs" conflict and then explodes, the CND felt she didn't have any ideal pattern for handling conflict and consequently she has taken steps

to get some counselling to learn how to deal with the conflicts in her life.

A fifth example of the avoidance-explosion strategy of handling conflict was shared by a CND (profession, 1950) who shared a number of conflicts in which things built up and then, when pushed to the wall, she would explode, out of control. It is understandable then how she would view any kind of confrontation as being out of control. Her actual conflict handling pattern of avoidance-explosion, is the same whether with a peer or with authority. When a superior told her she was pampering herself in a particular situation, the CND recounted, "I felt I was being attacked", and responded in kind to the superior:

You don't care if I'm living or dead. And I screeched this at her.... Once I got started, I couldn't stop.

In this last example, speaking about low self esteem as the paramount factor in not dealing directly with conflict, this CND (profession, 1964) incisively noted,

Having suffered a great deal, and only recognizing that of late, or experiencing a very low self-esteem, that would be key for me as to the confronting act or conflict.

Detailing her avoidance-explosion pattern she noted,

At one point I confronted the person. It took a long time. Like I remember I would wait a long, long time before I would... I guess the rage inside of me would be building up and that's when I'd blow! You know, the injustice in the situation brought

that rage finally to break through and let go and in rage!

With personal therapy and a concomitant renewed sense of self, this CND shared she is in the process of moving from an actual conflict handling pattern of avoidance-explosion to a preferred mutual confronting pattern, noting,

So I have been able to begin in a very small way to use like the "I" statements and this kind of thing and standing up for myself, but falling down too because I am still very, very much a novice in that.

Protection. A fourth type of avoidance handling in conflict is the pattern which emerged as avoidance-protection in the data. It can be, in my opinion, a constructive and proactive volitional choice to avoid overtly confronting the other in a conflict because of such variables as the power and influence of the person. One participant (profession, 1979) illustrated this well.

But I know my tendency is protection just because I came from violence in the home, and so it's learning to respect that that's OK that I did that. That's not a sense of cowardice....

Recognizing that denial and avoidance patterns of conflict handling were early coping strategies for her, coming from a violent home, she has now learned through personal therapy that there are situations where avoidance of conflict can be constructive. In a major conflict with a person of power and influence, she reached a point

where, to protect herself from this person, she avoided direct confrontation. She entertained a lot of guilt initially because of this avoidance but is now coming to grips with seeing it as one of many conflict handling strategies. It is not the only one she uses; in fact, in most conflicts today, her preferred pattern is overt confrontation. She has come to the recognition and acceptance of proactive conflict avoidance as a strategy for self protection in certain circumstances.

Preparation. A fifth type of avoidance handling of conflict is one that I think can be consonant with a healthy conflict handling pattern. It is what I call avoidance-preparation and is typified in the following examples. For one CND (profession, 1950),

In conflict, I still know that I flee from it, for a while anyway... Then I'll come back after I've been keyed up more to see that perhaps I should work on it...

Another CND (profession, 1960) in speaking of the changes in her conflict management pattern, referred to her leaving the conflict situation no longer as avoidance but time used for reflection before going back.

There's a lot more time goes into it, the preparation, and I don't call this avoidance now. I find it is preparation.

Third Party Conflict Mediation

A type of conflict handling that is spoken of in the literature is that of third party mediation. Among the research study participants, three examples were shared where this was the course of action after other efforts had failed to manage the conflicts in any other constructive ways. Two of the conflicts mediated were between peers and the third was a local group conflict.

The first example is one where two peers worked together in a professional context. One was constantly berating the other despite numerous efforts on the part of the other (profession, 1968) to mutually reconcile their differences. The study participant attempted a number of personal behavior changes in an effort to accommodate her peer.

I always felt that if we could just talk it through, if we could each own the piece of it that didn't work, but I would attempt to do that but it was always, there was never a way in which I felt that she could meet me on a ground that was not protecting herself. She always seemed to have to be right...

Looking at what her options were in terms of handling the conflict, she spoke to her provincial leader about it, and requested that she mediate the conflict. The provincial leader did agree to do this but it didn't work.

But I spoke with the provincial and I asked her if she would come and sit in with us and try to mediate the experience. The provincial had a real hard time handling it. When she came, she got very testy and said that she felt we were trying to put her in

the middle of a problem. And so it didn't really work; that mediation did not happen.

An important point is brought out in this failed mediation attempt. The person who agrees to mediate a conflict should have sufficient skills in conflict management not to become enmeshed in the situation, thus aggravating it.

A second example of third party conflict mediation was shared by a research participant (profession, 1959) who had tried everything to establish a working relationship with a peer on whom she relied for certain services essential for the smooth carrying of her own ministry. Despite a number of occasions of confronting the sister concerned, and seeming changes of heart, there were no changes in that peer's actions, to the point that the participant said that when she approached her to request her services, "I always felt put on the shelf; I always felt so insignificant".

Here again the person went to her provincial leader and asked her to do something to ameliorate the situation, "cause I can't do anymore". The provincial leader led the two parties through a mediation process that did help the situation somewhat, even though it was never a comfortable situation. The interviewee said,

But it was better for a while and then it would start again. But it was better. I have to say it was much better because the agreement was right in the open and to me that was a big step in the right direction.

The last example of third party mediation shared was

by a participant (profession, 1959), who as the leader in a local group, obtained the services of a counsellor to help mediate a group conflict. It was presumed that one person was controlling the group and there was a lot of passive aggressiveness.

From the detailed description given by the interviewee, it seemed that the mediation was successful in that a number of women in the group became more self-empowered and chose to move out of the situation.

They were helpful. And I think there was support in a constructive way, as we kind of talked about the things that impacted us or bugged us,... so that was a constructive way to approach it, but you saw at the same time, I'd say passive aggressive and controlling behavior that even operated within that ...

It failed in the sense that there didn't appear to be any resultant bonding or cohesiveness in the group. The decision for the mediation came from the top down and probably wasn't owned by all the group. Consequently, over a period of months meeting with the counsellor on a regular basis, the peer in question in a passive aggressive way sabotaged the meetings and the follow-up group work.

If we said something at the meeting... and if she were involved in it, then she would be mad at the person who said something that involved her and you got the real cold shoulder all week or all month or whatever the span was. And ... there were times that she refused to speak in the group.

I really found that the counsellor allowed

her passive aggressive behavior even to control the sessions.

Here again in this third party mediation for conflict management, definite skills are required. It is also essential for all those involved to agree to such a process, or as seen above it can be sabotaged, with dubious results.

Summary

In summarizing this discussion on actual and preferred conflict handling strategies, a number of observations are made. Many CNDs have conflict handling strategies that are composites of two commonly noted strategies: avoidance and confrontation.

First, as participants shared how they actually handled conflict situations, the variations of avoidance strategies ranged from avoidance suggesting passive aggressiveness, cynicism and explosion, to that of protection and preparation. Recurring themes related to actual conflict handling avoidance patterns were, "I don't have the courage or the guts to confront", "I don't know how to confront", "I don't want to rock the boat, ruffle feathers".

By and large, I sensed that many CNDs were unaware of what strategies they used or how effective these were, context and person contingent. In a number of cases, when I asked them what their ideal or preferred strategies for

handling conflict would be, they simply stated that they didn't know; they lacked the know-how.

The second way of handling conflict which emerged from the data was that of overt confrontation. Very few could suggest actual overt confrontation strategies. This was noted even when the individuals did use overt conflict handling strategies. A couple of participants did speak about using "I" statements in their confrontations and rehearsing how they would share their concerns. Even some of the participants who reported receiving help with handling conflict suggested they still felt like neophytes in this area. Those who are learning in an ongoing way to see conflict as normal, natural, inevitable and a great source of growth, if it is constructively handled, are increasing their proactive strategies which they have learned in personal therapy, counselling, spiritual direction, communication workshops and conflict workshops. A few CNDs who used overt conflict management strategies reported a chagrin for being labelled "troublemakers" in the system.

Overall, it appears that many CNDs in this research are deeply enculturated within the congregation's cultural norms and taboos related to conflict. A number of these women noted that their norms and taboos related to conflict were initially instilled at home but strongly reinforced in the CND as being the good nun, the holy

religious, the praying religious who obeys authority, right or wrong.

Time and again CNDs herein, related their inability to recognize and handle conflict in any constructive way to very poor self-esteem, adding that in many instances the self-esteem they had when they entered the CND was diminished because of the emphasis on totally negative feedback and lack of affirmation. It was felt by a number of the participants that emphasis on developing one's faith to the detriment of one's personal psychological growth exacerbated the problem. As a number of participants noted, we were "brainwashed" in the CND to become "doormats".

When CNDs reflected on ideal conflict handling patterns, a number emphasized the importance of interfacing spiritual and psychological development. Women who felt they were beginning to handle conflict constructively have stated that they have had their true self-esteem built up outside the CND. In such affirmation outside the organization, they have come to a deeper self identification of who they are first and foremost apart from the organization of the CND, and are working at interfacing this personal identity with their group identity within the CND.

Effects of Not Handling Conflict

What has been the price CNDs have paid for how they handle conflict? That question was posed to the study participants: What are the physical, psychological and spiritual effects of how CNDs have handled conflict?

One CND (profession, 1958) summarized her perceptions of the price CNDs have paid with the following: "So I see the psychological and spiritual and physical effects and I think the one I'm looking at right now are the physical illnesses". What follows are the verbatim accounts of the physical, psychological/spiritual effects as recounted by the interviewees.

Physical Effects. When asked to reflect on the physical effects of not dealing with conflict, CNDs included the following:

- I think our bodies have suffered. I think we've driven things into our bodies that will someday have to come out before they come out in a cancer or arthritis or whatever (profession, 1959).
- I think sometimes people get sick, either physically sick or they end up being psychologically sick because they sit on it for so long. I've lived with people with stomach problems or headaches, whatever, but I think it is the result of not dealing with, or just trying to sit or deny what's wrong. And I think ultimately what happens is you get very un-intouch with yourself. You don't really know yourself very well (profession, 1968).
- I think that all the indigestions I had were caused from that. And I think the gall bladder that I had some years after, I'm sure all these

gall stones were made from these things because you couldn't resolve them (profession, 1923).

- I might feel something more down here in my stomach and I'd say that's where I might be most conscious of something (profession, 1959).
- Some have gotten ulcers, and perhaps in some cases, cancer, you know, stress, holding something in... (profession, 1956).
- Well, I became physically ill... shortness of breath..., migraine headaches. I also stored this stress and it came out in my body in the form of pain in my joints, in my knees and elbows... (profession, 1964).
- I have a hiatal hernia. I grit my teeth and sometimes, visually, my vision is impaired a bit... (profession, 1963).
- I guess the swallowing of the conflict and the breathing (holding her breath to hold the conflict in) would be the ways that I have noted. And as a result, I have a hernia today and I have arthritis (profession, 1960).

One CND (profession, 1958) summed up the effects of not dealing with conflict this way:

So I fear what'll happen to us and is happening to us and it's concerning me in certain areas that the illnesses that we have are the result of the way we're living or not living.

In sum, CNDs have listed a myriad of physical ailments, including migraine headaches, ulcers, cancer, arthritis, gall bladder and other indigestion problems, hernias, and teeth grinding, which they see as the result of the tension and stress build-up in their bodies from not dealing appropriately with conflict.

Psychological and Spiritual Effects. Looking at the importance of interfacing our psychological and spiritual growth, a number of CNDs spoke about the effects of not handling conflict in these areas of our lives.

- See, I think what we curb psychologically and physically and is at the heart also of the Visitation mystery, is spontaneity (profession, 1958).
- ... trying to swallow conflict and trying to be passive ... (profession, 1960).
- I guess I have seen people destroyed in community... not able to express themselves, feeling like they were nothing, held down.... They're angered and embittered (profession, 1964).
- What I actually do is I regress; I withdraw (profession, 1963).
- I think we have the price of very slow growth.... We've suffered in our own persons... We've remained submissive by not being able to take stands and to uncover conflict that needed to be uncovered.... We've paid a price along the lines of social justice, like the courage we need to move with social justice issues comes from facing conflict and taking stands (profession, 1959).
- For myself, I can become a workaholic. I can be extremely guilty. I can be extremely hard on myself. I can feel extremely alone and not part of anything. A sense of belonging has almost been extinguished. A loss of self worth and dignity... and it can almost be the state of depression... (profession, 1985).
- And I get depressed over it. And I don't want to because it doesn't do any good.... I think too, it might be affecting my prayer life. I'm just wondering what's happening to my prayer life because it sounds terrible but I can't find the time to fit it in right (profession, 1942).
- We sometimes say, "It's my community's responsibility to make me happy". And I've lived with a

lot of people where that is their attitude....
That to me is a reactive kind of statement...
(profession, 1968).

- Don't ruffle the waters; just keep peace on this earth and the conflict will go away. And I think... it does something to the person. I think it causes a little bit of death in each person when that happens. I really think that it squelches life if you can't say or feel, or say what you feel, say how you are (profession, 1943).

In sum, CNDs who have avoided conflict believe that they have had slow personal and spiritual growth, that spontaneity has been squelched, that people have become embittered, have withdrawn, have become depressed and have become workaholics. One of the main results, from the participants' perspectives, is that CNDs are not out in the forefront on social justice issues.

Summary. As can be seen from the above reflections by the research participants, the physical, psychological and spiritual price paid for how conflict is handled within the CND can be costly.

Effects of Handling Conflict

As I listened to the participants' stories wherein there appeared to be more overt and seemingly constructive handling of conflict, I observed two things. The first is that although a number of the participants reported that they were working on more constructive and overt ways of handling both peer and authority conflicts, by and large,

they didn't see themselves as handling conflict upfront. Even when they are doing it, or are learning to do it, they still don't perceive themselves as handling conflict well, as typified in the following comment made by one such participant: "I feel I'm not a person who does that well naturally" (profession, 1967).

The second observation is that many of the participants whose shared conflict stories illustrated ongoing efforts at constructive handling, are receiving or have received personal therapy, counselling, spiritual direction to help them with this issue. They are working on more overt handling of conflict as individuals within a cultural organization where there are powerful, and for the most part, I think, unnamed conflict norms and taboos.

It seemed much more difficult for the interviewees to name the positive effects of handling conflict. After I would illustrate for them, from their own stories, that they were working at constructively handling conflict, only then were they able to share some positive psychological and spiritual effects. I might add here however, that this was still somewhat difficult for them because they seemed to have difficulty recognizing the positive in experiences that were, for the most part unpleasant and painful.

Psychological and Spiritual Effects. In the comments which follow a number of positive effects were noted.

- Conflict is absolutely essential to all of us in church and political and religious life in order to grow (profession, 1958).
- Well, it was growth producing when I worked it through (profession, 1959).
- I think I'm much more alive because of them (profession, 1967).
- Conflict can bring life and zip (profession, 1943).
- There's a value inherent in conflict.... Every time I handle it I'm a winner (profession, 1959).
- I'll walk around many a block to avoid an argument and yet more important to me than that is the peace that comes from truth (profession, 1958).
- Handling conflict prepares us for handling conflict. And you just find it creates a bigger cavern in you that makes it possible for it to be stronger and deeper the next time (profession, 1967).
- I feel that I worked it through enough to grow through it and to know what I would do if I lived in the situation with someone like that again (profession, 1959).
- Solve it when it occurs, mutually settle it so that there's no bad taste in my mouth and I don't have any reason to believe there would be a bad taste in hers (profession, 1943).
- I went to her... and (then) I let it go. And I did let it go! I wasn't burping it and that to me is the test (profession, 1959).
- I grew a lot through the conflict because I'd take stands and I just didn't let it go (profession, 1959).
- And it's life giving. And you say, "Oh God, why did it take me so long to learn this?" (profession, 1960).

These few excerpts of participants describing the positive effects of handling conflict illustrate the tremendous potential they have experienced in conflict. For such participants, they felt that conflict enhanced personal, psychological and spiritual growth. It had a certain energy and passion that makes one feel more alive. Facing conflict helped one take stands on things and hold one's truth as sacred. Handling each conflict was preparation for other conflicts that are bound to occur. It was an opportunity to increase one's conflict management strategies. When conflict was managed and some kind of closure is given, then it released energy for other causes.

Summary

Section Two of this chapter has been an analysis of the first research question: How do women religious within the CND describe and give meaning to their experiences of interpersonal conflict? Integral to this analysis has been a discussion of the different types of conflicts as displayed in Table 5. The interviewees recounted how they handled the conflicts and whether such handling conformed to the CND cultural organization's norms and taboos or whether they challenged these. Such stories depicted the individuals' attitudes toward conflict. For some it was avoidance of conflict at one end of the continuum. For

others, it was ambivalence and for others, it was recognition and acceptance of the conflict.

The meta meaning given to conflict by CNDs was discussed. Peers and authority were the two main parties involved in interpersonal conflicts. The actual and preferred patterns of handling conflict were explicated according to two well known patterns of confrontation and avoidance. Criteria for the specific pattern of handling the conflicts were given. When there was actual confrontation, the conflict involved a very important personal or social justice issue and/or the person had the courage and the know-how to confront. When there was avoidance it took on different patterns including passive aggressive handling of the conflict, avoidance and then explosion, avoidance in cynicism, avoidance as protection and avoidance as preparation to go back and more directly deal with the conflict.

Third party mediation was discussed as a type of confrontation used after dyadic confrontation had failed. An "objective" outside party was invited to become involved in the conflict in the hopes of better management.

Contrasting actual and preferred patterns of handling conflict, many participants demonstrated a desire to handle conflicts when they actually happen, but to do so in a mutual way in which they can have their needs heard

and respected and at the same time respect and heed others' needs. A constant in each participant's discussion of preferred patterns of handling conflict was the issue of lack of courage and/or know-how to overtly handle conflict.

Finally, the physical, psychological and spiritual effects of not dealing with conflict in more overt and constructive ways in the CND were summarized. The participants detailed the numerous physical, psychological and spiritual problems they have experienced as a result, at least in part, from the avoidance or inappropriate handling of conflict and stress. The price for such handling of conflict has indeed been great among these participants. The effects of more overt and constructive handling of conflict were touched on by some of the participants.

Section Three: Research Question Two Emotions, Particularly Anger, in the CND

Introduction

Section Three analyzes and discusses the data related to the second and last research question of this study: How do women religious within the CND describe and give meaning to the emotions, particularly anger, in conflict

situations? Section Two analyzed and discussed the data related to the first research question of this study.

It is important to reiterate that both of the research questions have been looked at solely within the context of the CND. The interviewees were asked to describe and give meaning to interpersonal conflicts and concomitant emotions within the CND. No effort was made to compare and contrast these with interviewees' descriptions and meanings of interpersonal conflicts and concomitant emotions outside of the cultural organization of the CND. The focus of this study is specific to how individual CNDs react to and cope with the cultural norms, values and taboos around conflict and the expression of emotions, particularly that of anger.

Positive and Negative Emotions

In Chapter II, an emotion was defined as an experience or mental mindset accompanied by visceral and somatic changes as well as feelings (Arnold, 1960). Feelings were discussed and interfaced with emotions. In the literature, feelings are part of emotions, that part which helps crystallize the whole experience of our emotions (Gaylin, 1984). Because "feelings are mushy, difficult, nonpalpable slippery things, even by definition, (and are) that elusive, neglected aspect of emotions" (Gaylin, 1979, p. 10), no distinction is made herein between feelings and emotions since they are used

synonymously in common parlance. They are used interchangeably in this research.

Emotions in the literature, as noted in Chapter II, are sometimes divided into what are considered positive and negative emotions (Arnold, 1960, Vol. I; Bernardez, 1988; Gaylin, 1979, 1984; Gill and Armadeo, 1980; Hammett and Sofield, 1981; Lerner, 1985; Madow, 1972; Miller, 1983; Sofield and Juliano, 1987; Stearns, 1972; Tavris, 1982; Wicks, 1984; Whitehead and Whitehead, 1984; Woodward, 1987). The positive emotions include peace, joy, happiness, love. Most people are usually more comfortable with their own and others' expression of such emotions. Emotions such as impatience, hatred, rage and anger usually make most people uncomfortable, particularly with any expression of these (Samuels and Lester, 1985). As a result, they are referred to as the negative emotions and consequently can be repressed or suppressed in their recognition, acceptance and expression. This research, then, is specifically looking at what some refer to as the negative emotions, particularly that of anger.

What follows is a twofold discussion of how CNDs in this study recognize, accept and express negative emotions. The first part, using data from ten interviewees, discusses the repression and/or suppression of negative emotions in the CND. As noted earlier, repression refers to the putting out of one's mind (usually done unconsciously) any painful or unacceptable

experiences. No intention is made here to link personality problems with repression. Suppression, on the other hand, is the conscious putting out of one's mind any painful or unacceptable experiences.

The second part, using data from four interviewees, looks at the gradual recognition, acceptance and expression of the negative emotions in the CND. The comments are an iterative slice of the data, from the verbatim responses of the participants, and are a combination of both individual and communal norms, values, taboos. It was observed that there were more data on the repression and suppression of negative emotions among the participants than data indicating otherwise.

Negative Emotions in CND

In order to highlight how CNDs in this research recognize, accept and express the negative emotions concomitant with conflictual situations, I asked them to share with me what they thought the CND Ten Commandments would be regarding the expression of these emotions. Comments from ten interviewees are now shared.

Reflecting on the CND Ten Commandments regarding expressing negative emotions, one CND (profession, 1967) summed it up well when she noted that for the CND, emotions are nonlearned and nonpracticed, adding that such repression and sometimes suppression are not healthy.

It's an area we're not into and not only that, ... our common experience has been that it hasn't been considered appropriate and I certainly experience it therefore as ... taking other energies and trying to channel it somewhere else so it's not getting a healthy outlet.

Negative emotions, I personally experience that as an area of nonlearned and nonpracticed (laughing), in terms of doing that deliberately.

And then I experience an added difficulty in that because we're not working at it too much as a group.... I don't think we even sit down and talk about the need to do that enough yet.

Aware of the necessity of recognizing, accepting and constructively handling one's negative emotions, a second interviewee (profession, 1968) thinks CNDs are out of touch with themselves because they are out of touch with their feelings.

I think we have a lot of people in the congregation who are not in touch with their feelings and I just say that from my community experiences, people I've lived with who have really internalized the "good nun" image of, if she's really the "good sister". She could be driving everybody else in the house crazy... And as I said, I think a lot of it was I was living with people... who were so un-intouch with their own feelings, that the fact that I would get upset and cry, was they couldn't handle that, so it was like my problem.

A third CND (profession, 1958) reflected on a value that may be common in religious life itself, but one that appears to be operating within the CND. It is the value of always having poise and being in control. This

interviewee thinks such a value affects how negative emotions are recognized, accepted and handled within CND. Since one has to be "together" and never fall apart, then expressing negative emotions becomes a taboo.

Was it religious life in general? Maybe every community could say that but... in essence, there's something about us that we must not fall apart.... I mean you really ought to be together....

Now, nobody really ever said that. It's just sorta that something was there that I think was part of culture and part of religious culture that said the good religious keeps all of that at bay in a certain way.

Referring to CNDs as educators, as "head" people, a fourth participant (profession, 1950) stated that formerly (she sees some improvement in this today) the commandment in the CND regarding emotions was, "We didn't express them", with the result that "they got bottled up". She elaborated on the results of such bottling up of emotions:

We paid a very great price, distancing ourselves psychologically. And we're less able to go out on mission to teach, to share, to relate... and closing off a very precious area of life. It aggravates a low self image psychologically...

Because a number of the study participants viewed CNDs as "head" people, people who use logical, rational thinking for problem solving and decision making, then one effect of that would appear to be that one is cool, calm and collected in all situations. This type of "composure" seems to preclude any type of expression of negative emotions.

A fifth participant (profession, 1985) summed up the CND norms and taboos regarding emotions with the following dictum:

Thou shalt not let someone ... show their true feelings or allow them to feel...

She added that such a dictum comes from the CND training as educators in which they deal mostly out of their "intellectual level without any question".

Like we deal in two levels: intellectual and feeling level and I think they have to be integrated.

A sixth participant (profession, 1979) did not hesitate to talk about the shutdown and naivete in the CND around feelings, particularly strong feelings. She made these comments in the context of sharing the pain of not being able to express her feelings of anger within the CND, adding, "it's because everything like that is so shut down in CND". She continued,

My God, if people really started feeling, we're in trouble. We're in trouble in terms of what people are gonna do with it.

It's the naivete that really drives me crazy, the naivete about people's feelings... around strong feelings (loud voice emphasizing "strong feelings") and I have strong feelings!!

A seventh participant (profession, 1959) who had difficulty naming any emotions she experienced in the conflict situations she recounted, exemplified well the

effects of CND training regarding the expression of emotions:

I don't think we own to others anyway, what we're really feeling.... We really don't say what we're feeling.

Speaking about the norm in the CND about not expressing one's feelings, this eighth participant (profession, 1956) said,

Well, very often we're not that verbal in expressing our feelings because so often in the past, we didn't go to someone to say, "I was annoyed by what you said last night" or whatever. You would just shrug it off or if you didn't shrug it off, you kept it within yourself. And sometimes, it could build up within yourself.

For a ninth participant, (profession, 1963) she first stated the CND norm regarding emotions: "You should not express your emotions", and then added, "If you expressed them, you expressed them to a few". The usual context for such expression was within a dyad or a small trusted group. She continued, "You would never say at a house meeting, 'I feel...' If you did, it was like... (participant makes a sound of disapproval).

Acutely aware that emotions are not dealt with in CND, this tenth interviewee (profession, 1959) spoke of the fear CNDs have of expressing emotions.

We're scared of emotions. We're downright scared. And unless we can allay some of this fear that's rampant in our community we're not gonna move...

She then noted the serious consequences of not accepting one's emotions.

Well, with bad humor, critical attitude
 ... I just feel that we're half developed.
 That's serious. And I think emotions are
 the screen through which we have to view
 everything and if we're not at home with
 our emotions, if we haven't received each
 of our emotions, they're not gonna be the
 screen through which things have to be
 viewed. And so therefore, we're only
 half developed.

More Recognition of Negative Emotions in CND

In speaking about the recognition, acceptance and constructive expression of negative emotions in the CND, four study participants noted that CNDs don't generally show negative emotions but hastened to add that this is changing. They could admit that there may be a bit more openness to people expressing their feelings.

One participant (profession, 1944) noted that CNDs were trained to be stoic, but since Vatican Council II and the ensuing renewal of religious life, people can be more themselves and get the helps they need to become better integrated.

Since Vatican II I would say that ... we
 are exposed to more things: religious life
 helps, workshops, spiritual direction.

The CND norm of "Don't let your feelings show" was shared by a second participant (profession, 1960) who hastened to add, "A lot of that kind of thinking has changed". Recalling when she entered the CND,

But I think in entering religious life,
 I really do think that we were to turn
 off a lot of things, turn off those

feelings, turn off those emotions. They were obviously there as human beings...

Even with a gradual change in the CND norm regarding expressing negative feelings, she added she has difficulty in actually doing this, tending to "stuff" her negative emotions basically because of a fear of her own violence in expressing them. She then reiterated, "We need to voice our feelings..."

"I see more of that done", was the response of a third interviewee (profession, 1943) when asked if the CND could express negative feelings. She added,

Oh, to me, it's day and night. Well, I think our whole sense of freedom came to us ... maybe as far back when we changed the habit... Vatican II.

A fourth CND (profession, 1949) when asked the congregation's norm for showing negative feelings, said,

I think we're beginning to let ourselves show (our feelings). But I don't know how to do it.

This participant touched on an issue of lack of know-how in expressing her emotions, as issue that was repeated by a number of other participants. Expressing emotions would appear to be "unlearned and unpracticed", as noted earlier by another participant.

CND Negative Emotions Norms and Taboos

In the previous section on conflict, a number of conflict norms and taboos emerged from the data. From the foregoing data, a number of norms and taboos regarding the

expression of negative emotions have also emerged. These are summarized in Table 7 which follows.

TABLE 7: CND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS NORMS & TABOOS

- * CNDs out of touch with feelings
 - * feelings unlearned and unpracticed
 - * emotions not accepted
 - * CNDs trained to be stoic
 - * CNDs head people
 - * feelings shut down in CND
 - * CNDs trained to have it together; can't fall apart
 - * one's own and others' feelings denied in CND
-

Summary

The foregoing accounts by CNDs in this study on the norms and taboos regarding the recognition, acceptance, and in particular, the expression of negative emotions within the cultural organization of the congregation could be summed up as follows. First, CNDs are head people; they are educational experts who have, by and large, developed their talents from the chin up. Second, they must always have it together and never fall apart. Third, as a result, it is felt by a number of CNDs that feelings are unlearned and unpracticed; CNDs have been trained to be stoic. Fourth, there would appear to be an emotional shutdown among CNDs, from the participants' perspectives, with a consequent naivete around emotions, particularly strong or negative emotions. Fifth, because these emotions are not accepted, except perhaps by a limited

number, and only then within trusted relationships, a number of CNDs think that being out of touch with their feelings means being out of touch with themselves, resulting in slow growth and development.

To conclude, I think there is a continuum regarding the recognition, acceptance and healthy expression of negative emotions among the participants in this study. There are those who have completely repressed any negative emotions to the point of not being aware of them. Then, there are those who are aware of such emotions but do not express them; they suppress them. Finally, there are those who are aware, accept and constructively express these negative emotions as illustrated in Figure 2.

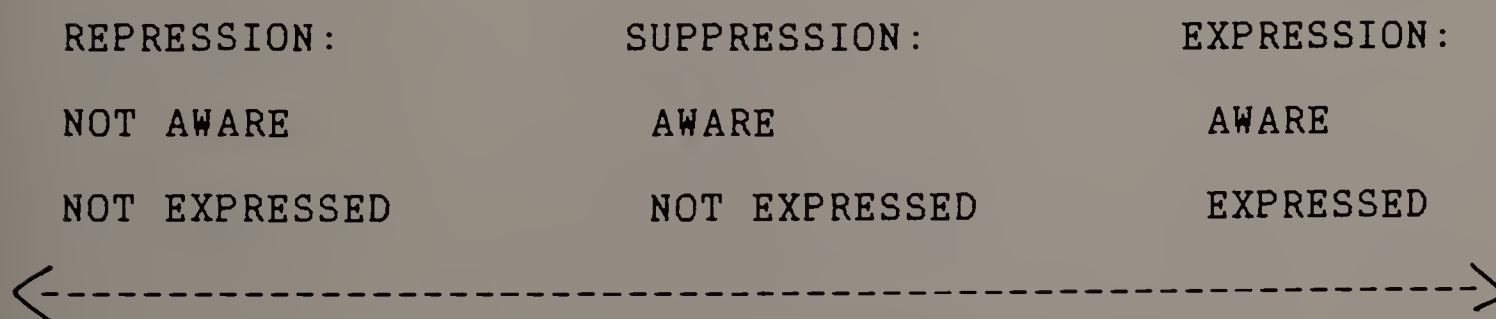


FIGURE 2: NEGATIVE EMOTIONS CONTINUUM

Negative Emotions in CND Conflicts

In any discussion of emotions there is the distinction between primary and secondary emotions. In the literature anger was described more frequently as a

secondary emotion than a primary one. To illustrate this, one asks the question, "If I were not feeling angry right now, what would I be feeling?" Anger could be described as the tip of the iceberg; underneath anger there is usually always another emotion. For this reason, in the following discussion of the negative emotions concomitant with conflictual situations, I first discuss hurt, frustration, and fear as the three negative emotions mentioned most frequently by the participants, anger aside, which was mentioned by 100% of the participants and which is discussed separately. Hurt was mentioned by 12 interviewees, frustration by 10 interviewees and fear by nine (9) interviewees.

The other emotions the interviewees spoke about are given in the order of the frequency of their being referred to by the interviewees as concomitant with conflictual situations: pain, annoyance, impatience, being mad, rage, loneliness, resentment, hatred, sadness, disgust, being embittered, being provoked, guilt, discouragement, nervousness, aggressiveness.

The three most frequently mentioned emotions: hurt, frustration and fear are now described and given meaning in the interviewees' own words. In order to highlight the different conflict contexts, eight examples of hurt, six examples of frustration and five examples of fear are shared respectively. Since the following emotions are contextualized within specific conflict situations and

since time has already been spent on describing and giving meaning to the conflict situations, no concerted effort is made here to recontextualize the emotions with the specific conflicts, except where such is needed to enhance the meaning.

Hurt. Eight examples of hurt were evidenced in the data and these are highlighted here. Speaking of a conflict situation in which the first interviewee (profession, 1979) was not believed by a person in authority, she said, "She believed him rather than me which really hurt". In another situation related to this same conflict, the interviewee added,

And another thing that really hurt was her question, "Why did it take you so long to respond?"

Being in a ministry (job) that she agreed to but is not where her heart is, a second interviewee (profession, 1944) noted, "So I'm kind of hurt and I'm struggling. I just don't know how to go about it".

Recounting a major altercation she had with her provincial leader about a province policy on travel and its ramifications, which the provincial personally didn't agree with, this same participant said,

I think that's what hurt, you know, that was the thing that hurt... It was just as if you don't deserve this.... It was just such a hurt.

When a CND colleague refused to follow up on a needed action, the third interviewee, (profession, 1942) in confronting her later, told her how she had been hurt.

I was very hurt today when you wouldn't allow me to turn the lights on... I just wanted you to know the lights weren't on.

Because of the number of times she has been hurt in conflictual situations a fourth participant (profession, 1949) had the following wish:

But I just wish that I could just let it roll off my back or that I had this mental shield that I wouldn't let things come and hurt. Maybe I could work on that one (laughing)!

In an interpersonal dyadic conflict over what constitutes membership in the CND, the fifth interviewee's (profession, 1958) peer asked her when she was coming back to community.

But the hurt in me, it took months to recover from that. "When are you coming back to community?" (stressing each word)

A sixth interviewee (profession, 1967) spoke of the hurt that resulted in a peer's open hostility and rejection which began when she became a member of the peer's local community.

So it became a very painful relationship and that was very hurtful.... Many elements of it still can almost trigger some pain or hurt....

In conflict with a peer who was oppressing others, this seventh interviewee (1964) reflected,

And I guess seeing other people dumped upon, put down and actually insulted in

front of me, in front of other persons,
that hurt me a great deal....

Speaking about an ongoing conflict with her provincial leader related to her working through a heterosexual relationship, an eighth participant (profession, 1963) commented,

There was a lot of anger and hurt,
especially in talking about sinfulness
and living in sin and breaking your
vow... the hurt and the anger that
I was being judged.

Frustration. Six examples of this second most frequently mentioned emotion concomitant with conflict are now highlighted.

Reliving a conflict she had had with a peer about how things were done in the new community she had moved into, this first interviewee (profession, 1959) realized that she was frustrated and angry in the conflict when tears came later.

I bawled all the way and I don't do that
easily, but I've also learned that ...
anger or frustration is really what
causes me to cry.

Talking about how CNDs attempt to hide or camouflage their emotions within conflictual situations, a second participant (profession, 1956) said that she attempted to shrug off her frustration with a provincial who was insisting she buy a particular piece of equipment before the person who would be using it arrived. "So I don't

know if she really understood that I was kind of frustrated over this".

In a conflict with a superior who was unreasonable in her demands when this third participant (profession, 1923) was ill, the emotion which surfaced first and foremost in that conflict was frustration. "More frustrated than anything else and at times, I was impatient".

When asked to reflect on what emotions she experienced in a conflictual situation with a CND colleague about a professional matter, the fourth interviewee (profession, 1950) said,

I might have been experiencing some frustration or feeling of inability to meet the situation in a way that would be reasonable.

Very aware of, and able to name and express any number of emotions concomitant to conflictual situations, this fifth CND (profession, 1979) spoke of great frustration, as well as anger and hurt in a conflict with provincial leadership where she felt her experience of harassment was not believed.

I'm very frustrated. I feel like I've been in a nightmare I can't wake up from.... I am completely, utterly, what are the words, baffled, angry, terribly angry and upset with them.

The sixth CND (profession, 1960), in her efforts to effect changes necessary within the congregation for her to carry out her ministry (job), spoke of her intrapersonal conflict and frustration.

It's frustrating really, not to be able to go a little faster. Especially as a traditional community, we don't move fast. For me, it has a sense of conflict....

Fear. Five interviewees spoke about fear as a predominant emotion they experienced in conflict situations. Like the other negative emotions, the description and meaning can be from either an individual or communal perspective. This first example of fear pertains to the latter where a participant (1960) wonders,

Why are we so afraid? What are we hiding?
And I guess that's where I feel a lot of
conflict with community.

Fear was the predominant emotion that surfaced for this next participant (profession, 1943) in most of the conflictual situations she shared. Feeling in conflict with authority when asked to be involved in different aspects of leadership and formation, she said,

I was really afraid. I wasn't angry. I said, "This is the rule".... I would feel absolute disdain and a fear ... that I couldn't do it.... The emotion of fear was very strong.... But I was afraid. And I was afraid because I just honestly at gut level, didn't think I could do these things.... And I would always constantly be present to that fear.

Having finally resorted to the process of third party mediation to manage a peer dyadic conflict, the third interviewee (profession, 1959) shared,

So when the two of us were home we had this meeting. And I was really scared that day. I was scared cause I really

thought she would wipe me out. And I was going in there just terrified.

Wanting to work directly with the poor and oppressed, a fourth participant (profession, 1985) spoke of her personal fear doing that and also the fear within CND vis a vis the conflict of her not being able to do this. "Well, there could be fear because it's an unknown to many people and it's an unknown to myself".

Because she was older than the rest of her peers, the local superior tended to "favor" this fifth interviewee (profession, 1947). "And I was fearful.... I didn't want a situation where I would be different from the others".

Summary. In looking at the eight examples of hurt, six examples of frustration and five examples of fear as described above in the interviewees' own words, it is interesting to note how often anger was mentioned concurrently with these emotions. Since all interviewees mentioned anger in their accounts and since it is the negative emotion of particular interest in this study, it is discussed next in detail.

Anger

Anger is the emotion of primary attention in this research because of the history in Christianity generally, and religious life specifically, to view it negatively. As discussed in Chapter II, such a view of anger in

religious life is based on a number of assumptions. Religious life is a life of perfection. Perfection as fact allows limited opportunity for growth as process. In other words, it is "Be ye perfect now!" at both the individual and organizational levels. Such a norm can impact how anger is expressed. Wicks (1984, p. 7) notes, "Yet when (religious life) has as one of its tenets the elimination of anger as an emotion, it is a threatening, misguided norm for Christians to follow".

Another aspect of anger noted in the literature is that is a reflex over which there is no control. It is not distinguished in its components of recognition, acceptance and expression. It is seen solely as expression, and expression that is out of control. In using Christ as the model for religious life, it is forgotten that indeed he got angry with the money changers in the temple (Matthew 21: 12). In addition, another Scripture passage from the New Testament regarding anger is also forgotten:

So from now on, there must be no more lies: *You must speak the truth to one another*, since we are all parts of one another. *Even if you are angry, you must not sin*: never let the sun set on your anger (Eph 4: 25-27).

What one can conclude from this second passage is that anger is recognized and accepted as a bona fide response to personal or social injustice; the only caution given is how such anger is expressed: "Even if you are angry, you

must not sin". The crux here is the way in which anger is expressed.

Recent psychological findings are highlighting the negative effects of repression and suppression of anger (Whitehead and Whitehead, 1984). As Wicks (1984, p. 7) incisively comments,

As one might expect, such a psychological philosophy of living can easily lead to personal devastation, an apathetic community, or supposedly religious causes that are based on legalism or extremism and unconsciously deliver hostility instead of the Good News of the gospel.

When anger is not recognized and channeled constructively, in a religious person or community, a lack of growth and/or increase in personal and psychopathology is the expected outcome.

Anger Definitions Reiterated

A number of definitions of anger were noted in Chapter II, highlighting its positive and negative connotations, particularly the former. Early socialization and training may have helped form a more negative definition of anger as a biological reflex over which we have no control. It may be difficult for us to believe then, that anger is not an inevitable consequence of a particular stimulus, but rather a learned one. Anger is the consequence of our interpretation of events which happen to us. Herein therefore, it is seen as a secondary emotion which tells us something is awry or amiss, and as such, it is seen as a positive emotion, when recognized,

accepted and handled constructively (Arnold, 1960; Gaylin, 1979; Lerner, 1985; Madow, 1972; Novaco, 1975; Tavris, 1982).

I have defined anger as that psychophysiological response to physical, spiritual or psychological hurt or loss. A signal that something is not right, it occurs when we perceive hurt, frustration, fear, pain or loss of self esteem. Because it is a human emotion, with judgment and choice involved, "the hallmarks of human anger" (Tavris, 1982, p. 36), "the decision to get angry has powerful consequences" (Tavris, 1982, p. 45; Madow, 1972; Phelps and Austin, 1975).

With the foregoing background in mind, the stage is now set to look at the anger data of this research. First, the norms and taboos regarding the expression of anger are discussed. Next, the ambivalence surrounding anger is highlighted by looking at the euphemisms used to talk about it. Third, the continuum categories of annoyance, anger and rage are used to display the data, using verbatim quotations from the participants in their descriptions and meanings of anger. Since anger was mentioned by all participants, the data used from each participant are those which are pertinent to the aspect of anger being discussed.

CND Anger Norms and Taboos

Here, as elsewhere in this study, the norms and

taboos given are a combination of both individual and communal CND norms and taboos. Some participants focused on their own internal dos and don'ts while others focused on their perceptions, based on a lived experience, of the cultural organization's norms and taboos. Ten examples are given.

Because CNDs are "professional intellectual snobs" (profession 1959), because they are "head people" (profession 1950), and because "they must always have it together and never fall apart" (profession, 1958), then this first interviewee (profession, 1959) noted,

If someone were to get up to the mike during the chapter and be angry, that person would be just wiped out as not having poise.

Maybe people know in their heads the importance of anger but have not allowed themselves to experience it.

Looking at the three aspects of recognition, acceptance and constructive expression of anger, this interviewee points out that the expression is not acceptable. CNDs are "educated, cultured, refined" (profession, 1947) and must have poise at all times.

A second participant (profession, 1985) still "young" in the cultural organization of the CND, shared this taboo against anger.

Even religious life, we're not supposed to get angry. We have to be great; everything is fine.... And... everything has to be perfect!

A third participant (profession, 1979) succinctly stated how CNDs feel about anger. "But anger is really hard for people to accept and say it's OK".

A fourth CND (profession, 1964) spoke about the common assumption in religious life of anger being seen as a negative emotion and therefore not acceptable.

I think what probably the problem was, is that certain emotions were considered to be bad emotions, like anger was a wrong behavior, not only from a Christian stand-point but from a woman religious standpoint. You just wouldn't be angry.

A fifth interviewee (profession, 1960) in speaking about how we have been "brainwashed" in the CND about expressing emotions and particularly anger, noted,

We've been so brainwashed into some things that it's hard to come out of that yourself if you choose to grow.

When asked to give an example of brainwashing, she continued,

Anger would be one. You know how you deal with anger, how we have been told to deal with anger. Our whole emotional stability has been distorted: what you can do, what you can't do....

A sixth interviewee (profession, 1960) spoke first about her personal familial history of seeing anger as a bad emotion and the necessity to repress it.

So, in no way did I think anger was good and I am still afraid of my anger and I have been doing therapy for two years and counselling a year before that. And I have learned a little bit about being able to express it.

She continued, noting that CNDs as a congregation, are also afraid of anger.

I think that we're scared of that anger. That's the first part; that's the biggest thing, getting over that step to get into the others.... We're not gonna do anything until it gets out.

The seventh participant (profession, 1959) who has had a number of years of personal therapy just learning to recognize, accept and constructively express negative emotions which she reported had been repressed for years, commented on both her personal norm and the communal norm regarding anger: it's not OK to be angry.

Well, for a long time in my life I didn't allow anger; it wasn't OK for me to be angry. I'd be hurt as hell but it probably was anger but I didn't recognize it.

So when you say, "Does anger have value?" It certainly does! But it's not something that as a community, we're very comfortable with.

I'd like to know more about anger.... And it's absolutely essential; I know it's worthwhile. And I know it's something CND hasn't benefitted from in general. A few individuals have moved into it and moved through it.

The eighth interviewee (profession, 1968) touched on a norm in the CND regarding anger: suppress anger. It may surface indirectly in other ways but don't express anger.

I think that probably for the first time a lot of anger surfaced that I could recognize and identify as anger. I think sometimes it's there and you don't call it that; it comes out as other things...

This norm of suppressing anger and it coming out as passive aggressiveness was highlighted by a ninth interviewee (profession, 1968).

Passive aggressives ran the house... (and) it created pockets of real anger.... And the thermostat,... the television, those were the vehicles of anger. We took it out on that.

And there was a lot of pain in the house. There was a lot of suffering because it wasn't dealt with, so it was coming out all these side ways.

Being taken to task by her local community for bringing up examples of how the parish priest was oppressing them, the tenth CND (profession, 1979) was reprimanded by her peers because "I would bring it up in the group.... I upset the denial patterns, I know that". Being called an angry person in CND is indeed a reprimand. Knowing she had broken the norm that CNDs don't show anger, she had to deal with her own guilt in working it through. In the interviewee's own words: "I'm a bad CND. I don't pray enough because I'm upset by things!"

Summary

Crystallizing the norms and taboos in the CND regarding the expression of anger (Table 8, below) seems to be a variation on two themes. First, the participants perceived CNDs to be cultured, refined, educated, intellectual, head people who must always have it together

and never fall apart. Second, anger was seen as a bad emotion and if one is angry, then one is not a good religious, one is not praying enough. Some CNDs reported that there were times in their lives when they didn't even recognize their anger; they repressed it. Others reported they have been afraid to express their anger because it has the connotation of being out of control and therefore they have suppressed it. Finally, there are a few, who are challenging such norms and taboos and are attempting to constructively express anger in their lives as a healthy way of dealing with personal or social injustices.

TABLE 8: CND ANGER NORMS & TABOOS

- * CNDs must have it together, never fall apart
 - * CNDs fear anger because it means being out of control
 - * CNDs should not overtly express anger
 - * CNDs express anger indirectly
-

Anger Continuum: Annoyance, Anger, Rage

Because of the ambivalence some interviewees sensed in the CND about negative emotions generally, and anger specifically, a number of different euphemisms were found in the data referring to that emotion. A few CNDs herein maintained they rarely experienced anger; they spoke rather about being annoyed, aggravated, bugged, upset, ticked off, bothered, knocked for a loop, mad, provoked, frustrated, not too pleased.

In the data, there also appeared to be a continuum in the recognition, acceptance and expression of anger ranging from annoyance to anger to rage. Some women saw a difference between annoyance and anger. The difference appeared to be in the cause but could also be in the intensity of reaction to a given cause. Anger for many of the participants was caused by a personal or social injustice, whereas annoyance was caused by an inconvenience more than a personal attack. However, a build-up of annoyances led to anger for some, and rage for others. When asked to distinguish between annoyance and anger one participant (profession, 1947) reflected,

I think there's a difference between anger, real anger and being annoyed. I think I would be annoyed more than angry. Anger also is if I thought I was being taken advantage of.

When asked further what annoyance would sound like, she continued,

I'd be annoyed that you're not picking up your share of the work, you're not interested enough in the community to want to be with us for prayer or.... But to me, that would be annoyance. I'm not sure there would be anger.

Anger would be an extreme of annoyance. And the only other way I would think of anger also is if I thought I was being taken advantage of.

The participant goes on to describe what anger would be like to her.

Anger connotes being out of control. I can't recall incidents that I would really be angry, that I would throw things around or do anything like that.

Another participant (profession, 1943), who had a sense that more CNDs were expressing negative emotions, qualified her response when asked specifically whether CNDs express anger. What she shared was that people are expressing anger indirectly and use euphemisms to refer to it.

I find more of that in more recent years that people can say, "You know, that really bugged me". They might not say, "I am angry", but they would communicate the sense of anger in some way. "That really knocked me what you said. I didn't like that". "That bothered me when you said that the other day". I've heard that remark.

Another interviewee (profession, 1968) distinguished between anger and rage. For her, recognition, acceptance and constructive expression of anger is both good and necessary. When this is not done, then she feels that the anger is repressed or suppressed and turned inward until it erupts. For her, rage is anger out of control.

We've grown up in a church that says it's not good to be angry and a society that doesn't encourage that. And what ends up happening is then there are some outbreaks and pockets of rage.

And I think the same thing happens in community, where if we don't teach people how in a creative and constructive way to drain off the anger and to acknowledge it, but then to let it go. If they don't do this, then they will become enraged and it's not gonna be productive.

In sum, from these data, the anger continuum is annoyance, anger and rage. For some, annoyance is being ticked off. Anger is an extreme of annoyance and rage is

an extreme of anger. Each of these is discussed next in relation to the continuum as displayed in Figure 3. What follows are five succinct stories of annoyance, five stories of anger and six stories of rage.

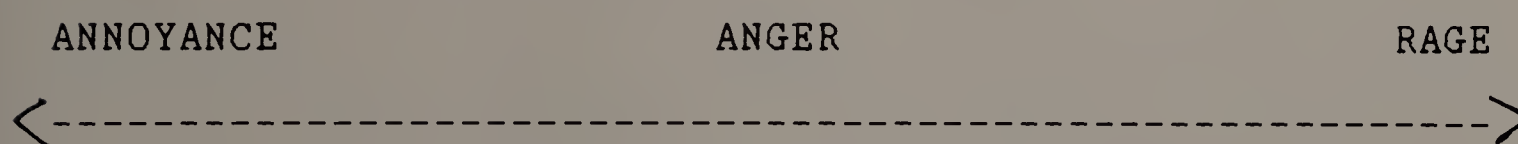


FIGURE 3: CND ANGER CONTINUUM

Annoyance. Speaking about a conflict with provincial authority regarding a travel policy, the first interviewee (1963), said,

It was like kind of an annoyance. I don't recall being very angry with her, I guess because I expected her to have that kind of reaction. I knew she was extremely strong and set in that stance.

Another interviewee (profession, 1956), in a conflict with authority over buying some equipment, wasn't sure if the authority really knew how she felt.

Well, very often we're not that verbal in expressing our feelings because ... we didn't go to someone to say, "I was annoyed...", so I don't know if she really understood that I was kind of frustrated over this.

Remarking how difficult she found it putting her feelings in words, a third interviewee (profession, 1949)

in speaking about a peer dyadic conflict where she perceived her peer was treating her as a child, listed a number of the emotions being discussed on the anger continuum, without making any distinctions between them.

As you know, I'm not accustomed to putting all this in words, but I find it's just very aggravating, annoying, frustrating, angering and all these things.

This fourth interviewee (profession, 1960) seemed to infer that annoyances can be the cause of anger for her.

And because of some of the annoyances or some of the things that bug me, and because of the anger those have stirred up within me about her and with her, I don't want to have anything to do with her.

Describing her dyadic peer conflict, where a peer told her not to put up her shades, the last interviewee (profession, 1959) had a sense of her negative feelings but couldn't distinguish one from the other.

I don't remember what I said but I really remember resentment. And I was further annoyed because it was this day where I should have had peace of mind, and I think that's part of what I was angry about.... I mean I was really mad and shocked....

Later she shared that only by thinking through a conflict and analyzing it later, usually with resulting tears, does she really know how she felt in the actual conflict situation.

I probably didn't even know how mad I was on the spot. I probably wasn't in touch with how mad I was but as I cried all the way to -----, I knew I was, just kind of reconstructing it....

Anger. 100% of the interviewees spoke about anger as concomitant to conflictual situations, the following five stories describe how CND participants gave meaning to this emotion.

A participant (profession, 1968) who was in conflict with her local community members about their going home for the holidays and not staying together in community, elaborated on recognizing and giving meaning to her anger, as well as other concomitant emotions.

I was very angry with the people who left but I was finding myself more angry that I didn't have a place to go.... I was resentful of it.... I found myself very angry at community because here was a tangible issue... but we couldn't even take that and work it painfully through.

Speaking about anger, a second participant (profession, 1959) said that for years she denied any anger in her life.

Well, for a long time in my life I didn't allow anger; it wasn't OK for me to angry. I'd be hurt as hell but it probably was anger but I didn't recognize it.

She shared how she has come to recognize the importance of anger in her life but that she still isn't comfortable expressing it. Speaking to the provincial team members about their lack of support of her ministry, she spoke in anger.

I spoke for an hour and a quarter in anger. And they were stunned, but there were some in the group who were able to cull through what I said. What I said, I needed to say, but I didn't need to say it in anger because there were points that didn't need

anger. But maybe I needed to speak in anger.... But then I was able to go to each of them and tell them that I didn't feel great about being angry.

Here it would seem that this participant, even though she accepts the benefits of overt expression of anger, felt subsequent guilt when it was done.

A third interviewee (profession, 1968) spoke of the long process she has come through to arrive at feeling OK about expressing her anger.

I used to not want to deal with anger so what I would do is I make a lot of excuses for people and only find out later that I really was angry and I never let myself deal with it.

So I've really forced myself to recognize it's not good for me and it's not good for other people.

I have a right at times to be angry about things when people are not being appropriate in terms of their responsibilities or whatever. I owe it to myself and to them to say something about it.

But I'm getting better at it.... I have the right to be angry and... it's OK to acknowledge that and... find ways in which to constructively deal with it.

The fourth interviewee (profession, 1950), demonstrated some ambivalence about anger. When asked if it were a good or bad emotion for her, she responded that it was good but her voice belied the statement. She pursued this.

I don't like it and that would perhaps would be a fairer answer. I feel I'm damaging someone else, injuring someone

else and then, physically, I don't feel comfortable.

A discussion followed where a constructive expression of anger was differentiated from a destructive expression of the emotion. I then asked her whether she thought a constructive expression was possible.

I guess it is possible since you're asking me the question but I don't feel (emphasis on "feel") it is possible.... It was so ingrained into me that expressing anger was destructive.

In conflict situations, this last participant (profession, 1985) spoke about a general shutdown of negative emotions in her. When asked about anger, she said, "I wasn't aware of my anger. I don't think I'm aware of it now".

Rage. Several participants in this study spoke about their rage in conflictual situations. In reflecting back on such situations, rage was looked on both positively and negatively. Most felt that rage was anger out of control. A modicum of interviewees saw the expression of their rage as probably being out of control. For one participant, there was a deepening of a relationship in working the rage through.

One CND (profession, 1968) who sees rage as anger out of control clarified her point.

If we don't teach people how, in a creative and constructive way to drain off the anger and to acknowledge it, but then to let it go,

because if not, they will become enraged and it's not gonna be productive.

Speaking about rage building up within her because of not dealing with a conflictual situation, a second interviewee (profession, 1964) described it in the following way:

At one point I confronted the person. It took a long time. I remember I would wait a long, long time before I would I guess the rage inside of me would be building up and that's when I'd blow.

I was so angry with the injustice of the situation that it brought that rage finally to break through and let go and in rage.

Again, a third participant (profession, 1950) spoke about anger not dealt with resulting in an explosive verbal attack. This kind of outburst is exactly how rage is viewed by most.

I really got all the anger that I had locked up for years, I let it out on her.... And once I got started, I couldn't stop.

Likewise, although rage was not mentioned in this fourth example, yet the seemingly out of control characteristic is present. The interviewee (profession, 1942) said,

I came out of the corner where she had almost literally pushed me, screaming and yelling. I said, "You are the hardest, the coldest, the cruellest woman that I've ever met in my life".

Focusing on the build-up and explosion pattern most common in expression of rage, a fifth interviewee (profession, 1963) recognized this pattern.

So I didn't confront the situation.... So after doing this for a while, maybe it was two months, I went out there and I went berserk, screaming and hollering at her.

The last example of rage given here is one in which the participant (profession, 1958) saw her explosion of rage as being good because she and her friend ultimately worked the conflict through to a new level of understanding.

But I raged at her, which I had to apologize later. But the hurt in me, it took months to recover from that. "When are you coming back to community?" I had never ever imaged myself as out, so I guess my rage was good.

We got together and we talked it out. So it deepened our relationship. I don't think it marred it forever at all.

Summary. The foregoing discussion focused on the anger category continuum as it emerged from the research participants' stories regarding their expression of anger in conflict situations. At one end of the spectrum was the emotion of annoyance which for some may have been a denial of a true experience of anger, while for others it was a sense of being inconvenienced, upset, frustrated. Next on the continuum was the actual expression of anger, where for a number it was seen as a normal and natural response to personal injustice. For others, it was seen as being out of control and destructive. Finally, at the far right of the continuum was the emotion of rage. This emotion was seen by most CND interviewees as anger out of

control. In one case however, rage was seen as ultimately having positive ramifications.

In sum, the anger continuum as displayed in Figure 3, is annoyance, anger and rage. Anger is seen by some as an extreme annoyance and rage is seen by some as anger out of control.

Actual and Preferred Anger Patterns

To further elucidate the expression of anger in the CND, what follows next is a discussion of actual and preferred anger patterns.

When giving meaning to their handling of anger in conflict situations, a number of participants focused on how they usually express anger, or how they formerly expressed anger. Looking at their present anger expression patterns, some interviewees highlighted changes from former patterns.

In analyzing the data on how the participants expressed their anger, repression, suppression and overt expression of anger emerged. Again, as stated earlier, and used herein, repression is putting out of one's mind (usually into the unconscious) painful or unacceptable emotions and experiences. Suppression is a conscious dismissal of these emotions or experiences from one's mind. Some participants used the term denial to refer to both repression and suppression. What follows are stories suggesting each.

Repression. Five interviewees spoke of the denial (repression) of their anger as their usual way of handling it, with varying results. They then shared how they would prefer to handle anger.

A number of interviewees spoke about moving from a usual denial pattern in their expression of anger to a more constructive expression of the emotion. A case in point is the story of one participant (profession, 1964) who spoke about the movement from denial to a better acceptance of her emotions, a movement occurring from the time she made profession to the present.

I didn't know what my feelings were on the whole. A lot of my feelings were on hold.

(Today) I'm much more aware of them... not all the time, but I know.... I have to say for me that's better. I mean 25 years ago, I was not owning them. So for me, there's been growth in that.

A second CND (profession, 1959) stated it this way about her actual pattern.

For a long time in my life I didn't allow anger; it wasn't OK for me to be angry. I'd be hurt as hell but it probably was anger, but I didn't recognize it.... I was not one who could really express anger....

Her preferred pattern and one she is using more today is the following:

When I share anger, it's usually upon reflection that I come back at it or else it slips out...

Maybe I'm not far enough away from blaming. I would use "you" when I'm really angry.

When I have worked it through I can touch base with the "I", but when I come real hot from the fire, it's easy for me to use blaming statements.

But maybe some day I will have learned that deeply enough to be able to say it when I'm real hot!

Having given a number of conflict examples where the concomitant emotion of anger was actually expressed by screeching and generally being out of control, now, the third interviewee (profession, 1950) sometimes tells the person she is angry, but mostly she talks it over with a third party.

I experience sometimes in telling a person I feel angry ... or going to another, a third party and telling them.... And sometimes something annoys me and I'm too worked up at the time, I prefer to go go chapel and talk it over with the Lord.

The usual way anger was handled by a fourth CND (profession, 1979), especially at home and then early in her religious life, was to slam things around. Now, she is learning a repertoire of strategies to express her anger.

But slamming things around doesn't work anymore for me. And it's not necessary, I mean for me right now. It's not my coping mechanism.

It's to find friends and safe places to do my little bit of cursing and crying and also strategizing to write and to use the skills I have to try to open up some of these things.

Sometimes denial of anger and its expression can go on for a period of time and then there is the explosion.

Speaking about this as her former pattern, a fifth participant (profession, 1964) then described her preferred pattern of expressing anger and one she is working on.

I guess I think I'd probably be a little better prepared or would want to prepare myself better for the meeting of this person and I wouldn't be screaming. The rage wouldn't be coming out at the person. I would hope to be able to work out some of the rage before that.

Another part of her pattern is that she no longer lets her emotions build up.

I don't store my feelings. If I feel that I can't share them with the total group for some reason, I will share them with somebody at some point and it won't be very long after the situation.

I have to say what I feel and I try to say it in a just way and in a caring way.

Suppression. In these next stories, eight interviewees share how they suppress their anger. They recognize it but they don't feel they can express it for a number of reasons including their perceptions of the strong CND norms and taboos regarding its expression, that it wouldn't do any good and finally, a lack of know-how.

Formerly, this first CND (profession, 1968) suppressed her anger.

I used to often not want to deal with the anger so what I would do is I would make a lot of excuses for people and only find out later that I really was angry and I

never let myself deal with it.... See I think for me, my pattern was I wouldn't even acknowledge the fact that I was angry years ago.

Speaking about her pattern of handling anger today, she continued, giving an example of such handling.

Most times I think I try to let people know directly, if I can, that I'm really angry. And sometimes, that takes the edge off it so I don't become furious. I can try to cope with it.

Speaking to a colleague about an incident she was angry about, the interviewee said,

I just want you to know I am very angry about this but I don't think it's the time for me to talk to you about it. So I think we need to set up an appointment for later today or tomorrow and just talk it through when I'm calmer.

In this second example, the CND (profession, 1964) formerly suppressed her emotions, including anger, because of her CND training.

But I heard it for two years so I guess I allowed it to brainwash me and so therefore when occasions arose when I probably should have been legitimately angry, I wasn't. I just let it happen and walked away or didn't say anything back,... and then the anger would come out like a blurt of yelling.

Her preferred way of dealing with anger today is expressing it appropriately in "I" messages to the person concerned.

It is our feelings that we are expressing and I think we don't blame them on somebody else. I think language is very important because when you start to say, "You made

me angry", rather than "I feel angry because ...". There's a whole different stance.... I'm saying this is my emotion and I'm not blaming you for the emotion...

Reflecting on her former pattern of suppressing anger, a third interviewee (profession, 1960) said,

I certainly would feel the surge of anger come up and I would swallow.... I would not breathe. Like I know it now but I didn't know it then. And so that not breathing certainly did say, "I don't want to feel this..." And I guess a walking away lots of times too, just saying, "I don't want to face this..."

Her preferred pattern in expressing anger is,

Well, I'd like to be able probably to discharge it when it's there, not to have to put it on hold.... One to one, I think ... my safest place.

I would probably not be very comfortable with anger if I felt other people were getting upset and couldn't absorb it and took it on as theirs and treated me differently.

A fourth interviewee (profession, 1956) who suppressed her anger shared her usual pattern of expressing anger with the following:

I don't think I ever said that I really kind of felt angry or annoyed.... I kind of keep it in and I don't tell the person usually, I was angry or I was annoyed or I was upset... cause I don't know if it would really do any good.

Similarly, a fifth interviewee (profession, 1942) spoke about her usual pattern of non-expression of anger because it would do no good.

Well, I was so angry, I wasn't gonna say anything.... I guess after a while it went

into resignation. "Oh well, what's the use? You can't do anything about it."

I feel so bad and angry I don't want to talk to her.

A sixth interviewee (profession, 1943) spoke about her pattern of expressing anger.

I might not say, "I am angry", but I would communicate the sense of anger in some way.

Reflecting on her usual pattern of suppressing her anger, a seventh CND (profession, 1960) noted,

I know that my struggle is not to say I can't be angry, I can't be upset or I can't be in conflict, but it's how do I do that? How do I do that in appropriate ways that are not destructive for myself as well as for the other person?

The last participant (profession, 1944) shared that in her usual pattern of expressing anger there was a critical edge in her voice which she wants to change.

I'd like to be able to express myself in a nice way. I think it's the tone of voice that I have.... And how do you change that?

Tears: Repression and/or Suppression. Five participants who described themselves as not in touch with their feelings generally, and their anger particularly, shared that their actual expression of anger began with tears. The tears helped them to get in touch with what they were feeling and many times it was anger. It seemed as if they had to go from thinking and analysis to get to the feelings involved.

In the words of one participant (profession, 1959):

It does help me to be able to name it and I tend to be analytical.... I don't know what emotion to name it.... I try to seek the cause of it before I feel it.... I don't even realize I'm bypassing it but I just naturally follow some kind of analytic route....

I've also learned that anger is one of the things, that really causes me, anger or frustration, that causes me to cry....

Similarly, a second participant (profession, 1949) spoke about not recognizing her anger right away but mentioned how the tears were a part of her pattern. When asked how she would like to express her anger, she said,

I'm still having a hard time with that, as you probably can tell.... And to even realize what anger is, I have a hard time with that.... It's just later that I realize....

Like I might want to close the door and be by myself for a while, maybe cry....

Because anger was seen as an extreme of annoyance to this third participant (profession, 1947), she shared that she rarely became angry. When she did, her usual pattern was to show it nonverbally, although occasionally she expressed it in tears.

I don't say anything ordinarily, but I know they know it from my face!

At times, I lashed out at her or I would cry.... And I think the other way I got rid of it too was talking about it because I was fortunate enough to have people here that would listen....

Having denied her anger for many years, a fourth interviewee (profession, 1985) prefers to express her anger directly, but not aggressively. Actually,

Anger for me right now is expressed through tears.... I have a very hard time to express it, (but) sometimes through writing, dialoguing with someone whom I can trust, like my counselor....

Looking at how she learned to express anger through tears at home, since it wasn't acceptable to be angry, a fifth CND (profession, 1968) stated this was her actual pattern for many years since it was not acceptable in the community either. Now, her preferred pattern is to express her feelings right at the time. Breaking old patterns is difficult, so she is still working on her new pattern.

OK, now what do I do, now that I'm becoming more aware of how to handle things more directly? But I felt myself angry, so how would I say it?

But I also knew that I was sitting there, and I was thinking, "OK, here it is. When you go away from this meeting, you're gonna be angry; you're gonna be upset. You're gonna carry all that back". So I said, "OK, I gotta be true to what I'm feeling right now, and just say, whatever the cost". So I said I'm doing it for me; I'm not doing it for her because I don't want to feel bad after this meeting. So I was glad I did it.

Summary. In summary, many CND interviewees are grappling with their actual anger expression patterns. For many, these patterns would appear to reflect the values, norms and taboos learned at home and reinforced in

the CND that anger is bad. Anger, for many, is synonymous with being out of control and lacking poise, not having it together, not praying enough. The women in this study who are working at learning the positive aspects of anger and more overt ways of expressing it are certainly challenging the system. Because of this, they are sometimes feeling alienated in the system to which they belong.

Consequently, a number of them are establishing a support network outside the system where they can be more affirmed.

Effects of Not Expressing Anger

Comparable to conflict, the effects of not expressing anger can have physical, psychological and spiritual ramifications. What I found mentioned more often than the physical effects, were the psychological effects (being critical, sarcastic, embittered and cynical), which in turn have spiritual consequences.

Again as part of this qualitative research, such meaning is detailed in the verbatim descriptions of the study participants.

- I have experienced anger over my lifetime through sarcasm, criticism, like anger came out of me... It came out sideways or arse first or whatever you know.... bad humor, critical attitude... half developed... (profession, 1959).
- They got bottled up... distancing ourselves, tenseness, low self esteem, psychologically, withdrawal, stunting my growth and my experiences to that extent (profession, 1950).

- I think people get very sarcastic; they get sharp with other.... I think sometimes people get sick, either physically sick or they end up being psychologically sick because they sit on the anger for so long. I mean I've lived with people with stomach problems or headaches or whatever but I think it is the result of not dealing with or just trying to sit or deny what's wrong.... I think you only get relief from it when you can say, "Yes, I am angry", and then all of a sudden there's a part of it that dissipates when you can acknowledge it (profession, 1968).
- I can become a workaholic. I can be extremely guilty; I can be extremely hard on myself. I can feel extremely alone and not part of anything. A sense of belonging has almost extinguished. A loss of self worth and dignity and sort of, it can almost be the state of depression (profession, 1985).
- I think one of the effects of not expressing anger is illness, psychological and physical. See, I think what we curb is at the heart also of the Visitation and that's spontaneity.... So I see psychological and spiritual and physical and I think the one I'm looking at right now is the physical illnesses (profession, 1958).
- Oh terrible anger, so much so that I had cysts. I broke out in cysts. I was anemic anyway but I used to get exhausted.... And I think that was part of the anger I used to feel.... I became very uptight. Oh, I was nervous; I was uptight. I was demanding (profession, 1942).
- I'm convinced I was carrying so much stress, I had so much stress within my body that, like it was just piled up in my muscles and the pain I had.... I stored this stress and it came out in my body in the form of pain in my joints (profession, 1964).
- Well, there would have been a lot of criticism, sarcastic remarks. That was present, stabbing, that kind of thing. So it was a critical stance.... And as a result, I have a hernia today and I have arthritis. And I know both are, in ways, connected with it (profession, 1960).

- Trembling... hurt... pain... I'm realizing more I'm a high stressed person.... I still feel that I should seek out counselling (profession, 1963).
- And there was a lot of passive aggressiveness.... You don't trust... or are not willing to risk.... (profession, 1959).
- Passive aggressives ran the house.... And the thermostat, ... the television... those were the vehicles of anger. We took it out on those. And there was a lot of pain. People were really suffering but it wasn't dealt with so it was coming out all these side ways (profession, 1968).
- I feel that I'm not true and honest to myself when I continue pretending it doesn't affect me (profession, 1949).
- All sorts of things. Some have gotten ulcers and perhaps in some cases, cancer, you know, stress, holding something in. I guess if too much is kept in you could become explosive at some point... (profession, 1956).
- A lot of my anger is coming out in different ways, whether it's my parent, or the kids or I'm angry with my friends... I'm just irritable, irritable, not able to tolerate, not able to put up with your humanness, letting things get to me, letting people push my buttons, being vulnerable, then negating myself, laying guilt trips on myself and then not feeling very good (profession, 1960).
- Well, I think I'll always have that resentment (profession, 1944).
- You feel that you're played out; you're tired; you're drained; you're unhappy. You just say, "What am I doing here? Is this religious life? I never thought it was gonna be like this. So am I in the right place? Should I be out of it or what?"
- You live with people who seldom smile and some people have been so embittered... hoarding up things they should never have there.... They need to be worked out so if they keep them there, they are keeping something that's gonna cause them the problem, not the other person (profession, 1923).

- Or pray it away! Prayer has often been a softening of my heart and a leading to docility.... I don't want to be manipulated by man, woman, nun or God, spirit! (profession, 1979).
- A lot of my anger has gone inside.... My area of least resistance seems to be down here" (pointing to her stomach), (profession, 1967).

Summary. To reiterate: According to the participants of this study, not expressing anger in constructive ways in the cultural organization of the CND has caused or aggravated such physical problems as ulcers, arthritis, hernias, stomach problems, cancer, cysts, fatigue. Psychological and consequent spiritual problems included lack of trust, resentment, sarcasm, cynicism, being embittered, loss of self worth, unhappiness, loss of spontaneity, lack of warmth, questioning of one's vocation.

Effects of Expressing Anger

The last theme which emerged from the data on anger was the mention of the good effects of expressing anger. Only a modicum of the participants were able to share what these effects were. A number of those who did share such effects also pointed out that they have learned the effects of expressing anger in counselling and/or personal therapy.

- Anger is one of those stages that I have to go through. I don't even know the stages, but I know that anger, from my own process is something that I have to go through.

- I'd like to know more about anger. All I know is what I read from my own experience and the journey that I've made.
- And it's absolutely essential. I know it's worthwhile and I know that it's something that CND hasn't benefitted from in general (profession, 1959).
- It's triggering off for us a realization that things need to be patched up and we can do something about it and not prolong it (profession, 1963).
- You know, I'm not in any way pretending that I have come to grips with the fact that anger is good. But certainly there has been a breakthrough because I get excited when I can express anger and when I see other people express anger. And I guess I see more people in my life, as I see them, who are afraid than are not.
- And I have done a lot during this past year... talking about anger and trying to express it. And I'm constantly being met with, "But there's a better way to do that", and I'm saying, "Tell me, ... because anger has such energy". Nothing happens unless we are a bit angry about it (profession, 1960).

Summary. The few participants who have begun the process of recognizing, accepting and expressing anger stated that they have a sense of well being when they have expressed their anger. A number of them reported that they feel anger is essential for growth in their lives. There was a sense of excitement and affirmation when they saw other CNDs express their anger; they felt anger gives a zip and challenges their points of view. Some also mentioned that they received criticism from CNDs when they expressed their anger; they were told there must be a better way to do things than through anger.

Summary and Conclusions

The focus of this Section Three was the display and analysis of the data related to the second research question: How do women religious within the CND describe and give meaning to concomitant emotions, particularly that of anger, in conflictual situations?

It was noted that emotions are divided into positive and negative emotions both in the literature and confirmed by the research participants when they elaborated on the "Ten Commandments" of the CND for expressing such negative emotions as frustration, impatience, annoyance, and anger.

Generally speaking, the research participants felt that CNDs have difficulty acknowledging, accepting and expressing negative emotions, particularly that of anger. In the words of one participant such emotions are nonlearned and nonpracticed. Some participants however, noted a gradual change in the acknowledgment and expression of these emotions. From the data, I concluded that the CND participants were on a continuum related to this. Some CNDs were not aware of their negative emotions and didn't consciously express them (repression). Others were aware of these emotions but for a number of reasons did not express them (suppression). Finally, at the other end of the continuum were CNDs who were aware of these emotions and expressed them.

The norms and taboos in the CND regarding the expression of negative emotions were summarized in Table 7 and could be summed up with the following: As head people, CNDs are by and large not in touch with their feelings. The norm is that CNDs have it together and that they not fall apart. Therefore negative emotions are denied, shut down, and consequently positive emotions are in many ways shut down also.

Apart from anger, hurt, frustration and fear were the most commonly mentioned negative emotions that CND participants highlighted as concomitant with conflicts. Description and meaning were given to each of these emotions, using their rich verbatim accounts.

Particular attention was given to anger and here again the specific norms and taboos related to this emotion were summarized in Table 8. In essence, the expression of anger is seen as being out of control, that there must be a better way to do this. Thus, the "better way" chosen within the cultural organization by many is an indirect expression of anger. This is done through passive aggressive kinds of behaviors including criticism, sarcastic remarks, refusing to cooperate. Since many do not express anger directly, many euphemisms are used to acknowledge and express this emotion. In particular, the anger continuum as displayed in Figure 3, looked at the nuances from annoyance to anger to rage.

Actual and preferred anger patterns were described and given meaning to by the participants within the patterns of repression and suppression. Finally, these women religious shared what they perceived to be the negative effects on them individually and/or communally for not acknowledging and expressing anger constructively. A few noted the positive aspects for acknowledging and expressing this emotion.

Section Four: Additional Themes

Introduction

As the CNDs who participated in this research told their stories of conflict and anger, four additional themes emerged from the data: 1) intrapersonal conflict, 2) vision of models of CND community, 3) sexuality, 4) self-esteem. Although the development of these themes exceeds the scope of this present research, yet it is important to note them here as part of the data display and analysis.

Intrapersonal Conflict

Approximately 86% of the research participants spoke about intrapersonal conflicts, conflicts in their own personal lives, even though they understood the focus of this research as interpersonal conflict. This is quite

understandable if one ascribes to the fact that as holistic beings people bring to their interpersonal conflicts what is conflictual deep within their own beings. There is an interdependence between the intrapersonal and interpersonal.

The following are some examples of intrapersonal conflict.

- At the present time, right now, I'm kind of struggling with my desire to work with the elderly and I find that difficult not doing.... And I accepted to come here and it was my decision... but I'm still struggling in my want to do work with the elderly (profession, 1944).
- It's kind of hard to think of but I'm just going to say some of the things that right now I'd think as a conflict within me.... I think of spending money. I'd say, "Oh, I'd love to do that; I'd love to go there". Then I'd say, "I really don't need that or..." (profession, 1947).
- And yet, I expected to step right back into the classroom. Well then I took some sabbatical months and I found I wasn't called to go back to the classromm. That was very painful. That minstry conflict for me was major, because the fact was, where was I going? (profession, 1958).
- I've also been at the point of reflection of whether this is where I belong. And so I've been doing some reflection on vocation... because I'm struggling with do I stay, do I go? (profession, 1968).
- I want to act kindly and Christian toward her but that's not what I'm doing. Tha't not what I'm feeling either. The conflict for me is to believe all that I have just said (profession, 1960).

Summary. In the foregoing accounts of intrapersonal conflict, it can be seen that, as holistic beings, CNDS in

this research just don't have interpersonal conflicts; they also have intrapersonal conflicts. What they are working out within the depths of their beings about any important aspect of their lives spills over to their interpersonal communication and conflicts.

Vision of CND Community

Using the constant comparative method in my data collection, I noted very early on in that area of the research, interviewees were speaking about their dreams, their models of a healthy CND community even though I initially was not asking about these in the interview. Because the topic recurred so often, I incorporated it as a focus of the interview leading out of a discussion of a healthier context for more constructive handling of conflict.

Reflecting back on the data collection process of the research, it seems quite normal and natural that CND community would come up, given the first research question focused on the description and meaning given to interpersonal conflict within the CND, not outside the CND in the participants' apostolic and professional endeavors.

- It also means right now a realization that I'm in a group ...that is...really struggling for its own life, struggling to find life in the ways in which we are being called to right now and I see that as an immense challenge and I don't have a real strong sense of where it's gonna take us....
- The thing I feel most sure of is that we haven't

run our charism dry. I don't think we've even come close to giving it the flesh that I think is so vital today (profession, 1967).

- There's not a guarantee written into our foundation that says we're here for infinity.... But I do feel that the foundational impulse that got us started is as relevant, if not more today than it was at the foundation moment.
- I think there's a belief that there is something in whatever our CND blood is, that can bond us. And I think we're struggling to come to awarenesses of what form that takes, but we are really at the beginning of the book... (profession, 1967).
- I feel very strongly that in order to grow and to be women in solidarity with one another, we need community in support of mission and that kind of community is the community where I know where you're at, that you're not ready to commit suicide and I have no idea living with you.
- It's the unity of mind and heart and it doesn't even mean living together but if we're not living together, like I need to be able to write to people and really share where I'm at. Somehow at the basis of real growth is communicating where I'm at (profession, 1959).
- Community is the quality of presence that's there... that I am genuinely concerned about the apostolate that that individual, that sister has been engaged in during her absence, like to be able, in some way, to support that person when she comes home or that I may be able to be open enough to share also with the sisters what I can.
- And I do think faith sharing is pretty vital to that. And I think that it's another breakthrough that will make the difference or probably will be the transition from communal living to community living and it's risky (profession, 1960).
- We need to focus community time and energy ... to improve the quality of community life.... We need to do concrete and tangible things.... I think we need training...tools that we can use in terms of just helping people to be able to say or talk about how they feel about things as they happen.... We need to keep encouraging each other to try to deal with things and to keep working with ourselves. And I don't know that that life long learning idea has really sunken in,

in terms of the congregation.... I think we have to constantly encourage older people to find ways to help themselves feel useful in terms of volunteering.... We need people to be more responsible for themselves... (profession, 1968)

- My experience regarding community meetings was that we said the significant things after.... So I might be talking outside of my religious community... and I mean if that's gonna help me to debrief and get it together, alright, but I need to go back to the situation... that I'm committed to by reason of choices, and dialogue and deliver my truth.
- I need to know that I am received into the community and to just say "Well, I'm different, but that's OK. They're receiving me" (profession, 1958).
- I want to live with people who are doing different things but people who have a sense of, some quality of security in themselves that they can go out and do their work and enjoy it and come in for a healthy sense of sharing and all that, but not needing me....
- I want people who will discuss issues, who are open to having their thoughts expanded beyond... people that can argue and do a little fighting.... a stimulating conversation.
- I want people who can also bring me up short but can do it in the way that this is just another part of life and it's not the biggest, major thing that's been brewing in them for six months (profession, 1979).
- I think developing trust will help handle conflict in community.... I think regular occasions to share something of our insides or our history or something.... Faith sharing or maybe even something from our background... to do it on a regular basis so that a trust level builds up and we get to know each other.
- I find that our ministries have gotten more diverse. We don't really know the struggle or the pains or the worries that go on in that particular ministry as opposed to this ministry (profession, 1959).
- But I think we're struggling with what does it mean for us to be true to who we are and to be true to who we are together (profession, 1968).

Summary. Because the focus of the first research question was interpersonal conflict *within* the cultural organization of the CND, then a discussion of the type of community that would enhance constructive handling of conflict is inevitable. Within such discussion was a highlighting of the characteristics of a CND community that would be in support of mission.

Sexuality

In any discussion of emotions it would seem a given that the topic of sexuality would come up. Such was the case in this research, but it was brought up by only a small number of the research participants. Given what appears to be a very strong taboo in the CND regarding sexuality, these few people spoke about it vis a vis the full gamut of their emotions, including their own sexual struggles, preferences and the necessity in the CND for this area to be dealt with.

Heterosexuality. Following are the comments from the participants dealing with the topic of heterosexuality.

- Like even our sexuality, if you see someone or something, it's to allow... it's OK to feel the way we feel ... You must not think of men. You must not think of erotic fantasies....
- I think sometimes we have a narrow vision of what our sexuality is. We have a narrow vision sometimes of what the vow of chastity is.
- And that's a reality and it's almost a "faux pas". You shouldn't mention things like that or even think things like that cause no one talks about it.

- But I think in order to deal with the future of religious life, in order to deal with the future of CND, these topics, these issues have to be dealt with carefully, very sensitively with the people involved and if they aren't, we're not gonna survive!
- But I guess my hope is that somebody will be brave enough to deal with issues like that, not as a renewal, because I don't think it's a renewal. It's an unconscious awareness within us, each one of us, no matter how old you are, you still have these feelings or these events in your life that are going to challenge you or call you forth in the vows and some physically, some emotionally, and some psychologically, some spiritually. We don't know, but I think there has to be an upfront saying this is what's happening (profession, 1985).
- I really think we need a lot of personal development sessions and not just intellectual sessions. I really think there needs to be an integration with the body and that's the scariest journey that we, as CNDs will ever make.
- We do have a lot trouble with sexuality and have a fear of where that would ever lead us and yet, it's the highest form of spiritual energy that I have at my disposal. And we run crazy from it (profession, 1959).
- Even your own sexuality, you know, the whole friendship thing. I mean that blew us all to... I mean we're all suffering from that. You couldn't have feelings; you couldn't be with another person; you couldn't be in another person's room.
- I mean all this stuff that we just tolerated, listened to and obeyed cause we thought that was the right way to do it. Some people ignored it; some people tolerated it; some people just stuffed it somewhere. I think I took it as, "If I said yes to commitment, that's what it meant".
- And as a result, I suffered a lot from that emotional stymie, being stymied. Whether it was anger, or whether it was emotional feelings of any kind.
- So what happens is kina withdraw... saying, "Where is all that affection gone? Where is it? Am I stuffing it somewhere and does it come out inappropriately or so-called inappropriately?" It's vicious! (profession, 1960).

Homosexuality. The following comments on homosexuality as a sexual preference were made by very few participants.

- And because of who we are, I think we all have homosexual tendencies; I think it's part of our make-up. It's what we do with it. And again, that's another taboo; we don't talk about it.
- And the moment someone does think that, they become uncomfortable and they say, "Well, it's not right". It's almost like you know, "Go to confession and forget about it", rather than saying, "OK, what do we do about that?" (profession, 1985).
- We need to experience our sexuality but I don't know how to do that, an experience of being able to express our emotions. Like, the first time I told someone that I felt sexual, that was scary.
- And to feel sexual is great, but the first time I shared it and because I felt sexual in relation to a woman, that was even worse.
- I'm aware that there have to be lesbians in our midst. There are and I think it's a whole area that we have to be open about and talk about.... I mean I really don't know where it originates but I do know that my acceptance of their person is a must in community (profession, 1959).
- I have friends that are lesbian women that I know quite well.... And I think exposure is a big part of it for me, I mean the exposure to people of integrity whether they're straight or gay. That's when everything breaks down (profession, 1979).

Summary. I think it is inevitable that in any discussion of emotions, sexuality will come up. It did emerge in the data but was mentioned by only a very few people. What they had to say was that as a community, the CND denies the whole area of sexuality, to say nothing of its implications for both heterosexual celibates and lesbian celibates. As one interviewee incisively noted,

unless CNDs openly address the area of sexuality generally, and heterosexuality and homosexuality specifically, then they will go down the tubes.

Self-Esteem

The fourth additional theme which emerged from the data was that of self-esteem. Self-esteem refers to a belief or a pride in oneself, a conviction that one is worthwhile. A general focus of the indepth interview was to invite the interviewees to reflect on how they saw themselves vis a vis their handling of conflict and expressing anger. It was during this process that they spoke of their self-esteem. I asked them, "As you think of how you handle conflict and express your emotions, how do you see yourself?" In the following excerpts, there are comments which reflect growth in self-esteem, while other comments reflect problems with it.

- I feel like I'm not a person who deals with conflict that well naturally (profession, 1967)
- I think I'm growing in it. I think I'm still learning (profession, 1968).
- And I guess when I look back on it, the big thing was I was dealing with myself... about being able to stand on my own two feet (profession, 1960).
- So that probably was the best experience of knowing I was important as a person and there was conflict and I had looked at it and had tried to live in a Christian way with it (profession, 1960).
- Well, I've come a long way in being able to state my emotions and to be able to first of all,

- touch my emotions, and to name them and then to be able to give expression to them.
- I have a long way to come with regard to my emotions but I'm moving and I'm grateful for the helps I've gotten and I have gotten a lot of helps because I felt for a long time that was a dearth in me and I went in that direction (profession, 1959).
 - I always felt my intelligence was normal or above normal but I felt that my social talents or graces were below normal so I had a poor image of myself.
 - And I felt that if there was conflict, that I was incapable of restoring it to peace and happiness. So I felt withdrawing was the better, you know... (profession, 1950).
 - I want to be able to say, I am -----, I am committed, and I'm a woman who believes in commitment and desires wholeness and knows that it is a struggle, and yet because of the faith that I have, I have to believe that in that struggle there's joy and there's pain. It's never void of that. I want to be happier with living.... I want to be able to enjoy life more; I don't think I am. I'm -----, who's not happy (profession, 1960).
 - I thought that I was being really good to be able to confront her because it's not in me to do things like that (profession, 1949).
 - I don't have the courage or the guts to confront anybody. I don't have the courage to do so or the know-how.... We didn't get any kind of training like that.... So I just say nothing (profession, 1942).
 - I'm a people pleaser and I'm finding it real hard beginning to say things that will disturb people because they won't like me... (profession, 1968).

Summary. A number of interviewees suggested they felt good about themselves as they learned more about overt ways for handling conflict and expressing of anger. There were also some interviewees who didn't seem to have

a good sense of self around these issues and noted how the lack of affirmation and emphasis on the negative in their initial and ongoing formation in the CND eroded their self-esteem.

Summary and Conclusions

In this section, four additional themes emerging from the data were discussed: 1) intrapersonal conflict, 2) vision of CND community, 3) sexuality, 4) self-esteem.

It was highlighted that 86% of the participants spoke about intrapersonal conflicts. This is not at all surprising given what I believe to be an interdependence between one's intrapersonal and interpersonal psyches. In fact, in a number of the intrapersonal conflicts shared, there were also the interpersonal conflictual components added. In these cases, the interdependence between the two appeared self evident.

The second additional theme emerging from the data was that of a vision for a healthy CND community. Since the participants in this study were asked to describe and give meaning to their experiences of interpersonal conflict solely within the cultural organization of the CND, then a discussion of alternate models of CND seemed to follow automatically. Their comments here were quite incisive; they felt CNDs have a big problem with the present model of community. Its purpose is for mission as

noted in the Consititutions, yet its structures, based on the monastic model of communal life, in many ways impede rather than foster the mission. The interpersonal conflicts described by the participants were contextualized within the present communal structures and its norms and taboos regarding the overt handling of conflict. As noted in the last section, the interviewees reported that CNDs have paid a very high price physically, psychologically and spiritually for not handling conflict.

In any discussion of emotions, particularly the norms and taboos regarding negative emotions, it would seem inevitable that the taboo against sexuality would surface. This third theme was surfaced by only a modicum of the study participants. It was interesting to note that two of the interviewees who brought up this topic discussed it at length after the interview was over and the tape recorder was turned off. From the participants' comments, it appeared that women religious are supposed, in some way, to be asexual beings. It was felt by these interviewees that expressing one's feelings and particularly one's sexual feelings as a consecrated celibate, has received short shrift in CND training. One "young" participant (1985) stated emphatically that unless the congregation deals with this issue honestly and realistically in both its initial and ongoing formation, "it will go down the tubes".

The final theme which emerged from the data was the reference by many CNDs to the high incidence of low self-esteem related primarily to the handling of conflict and expression of anger. The interviewees reported that the strong CND conflict and anger norms and taboos had their impact on individuals' self-esteem, particularly if these individuals didn't conform to them. A number of participants also spoke about the emphasis on the negative as part of their training. Because of a distorted notion that affirming someone would make her proud, the emphasis was by and large on the negative. The participants stressed many CND women have been affirmed outside of the community. A number shared having their talents and gifts affirmed outside of the cultural organization. Other CND participants have continued to work on their self-esteem through personal therapy, counselling, spiritual direction and workshops specific to open communication and expressing emotions. One participant noted that the CND has been remiss in recognizing that theology and psychology complement one another.

Having displayed and discussed the data in this chapter related to the two research questions, Chapter V follows next with summary, conclusions, questions and recommendation.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, QUESTIONS & RECOMMENDATION

Introduction

In Chapter IV, I displayed and analyzed the data on conflict and anger using the verbatim accounts of the interviewees. In this chapter, I summarize the data, draw a number of conclusions, look at implications for the cultural organization of the CND and other groups, and finally suggest recommendations. Section One summarizes the first research question on conflict. Section Two summarizes the second research question on emotions, particularly anger. Pertinent conclusions and questions are iterated, and one recommendation is made.

Section One: Summary & Conclusions on Conflict in CND

Introduction

It is important to highlight two things from the data which help contextualize the summary and conclusions related to this research question. The following comments refer only to the participants and their perceptions of the CND as analyzed in the data. Since this has been a qualitative study, the conclusions drawn herein cannot be generalized to the total CND. First, the CND displayed the characteristics of a cultural organization and members

within this organization gave a profile of who they are. Second, there would appear to be definite conflict norms and taboos present in this iterative slice of data from the organization and these affect how conflict is seen and handled within this purposeful sample.

CND as a Cultural Organization

At the outset, I think it is important to reiterate the parameters of the first research question. CND women religious were asked to describe and give meaning to interpersonal conflictual experiences within the Congregation de Notre Dame.

As members of a cultural organization, the Congregation de Notre Dame, participants in this study reported their personal perceptions of who they are as CNDs. On the whole, CNDs are professional, intellectual, head people. Belonging to a more traditional and conservative community, they are cautious and non-risktakers, particularly in areas where there is the necessity to move from words to action. There is a gap between the words professed, both oral and written, and the actions taken related to renewal and change. Although a CND maxim is unity in diversity, a number of CNDs think that unity in conformity is really the maxim. Living a life of perfection, there has been an emphasis on eliminating the negative aspects of both the organization

and individuals in the organization. As a result, there are high expectations both from authority and one another and there is very little affirmation of the positive, to the point that a number of CNDs have reported being affirmed only outside the organization. Finally, CNDs in this research spoke about the struggle of being an apostolic community with the focus on mobility for mission and their attempting to do this within a monastic regimen. Within these parameters, it came as no surprise that a consistent additional theme was the discussion of alternate models of a healthy CND community which would focus community for the purpose of mission, and within which conflict could be handled more constructively.

Conflict Norms and Taboos

In this research, I asked the participants to share with me what they thought the "Ten commandments" of the CND were pertaining to the handling of conflict within that cultural organization. I wanted to tap into how women religious recognized, accepted and handled interpersonal conflict within such an organization as described above. Because my personal experience, as a CND, was that the organizational conflict norms and taboos, by and large, impeded, rather than enhanced any constructive dealing with conflict, I wanted to hear about other CNDs' experiences. Thus, my rationale for looking

at how CNDs handle interpersonal conflict within the organization, and not anywhere else, was to recognize and name the organization's conflict norms and taboos. The process of change includes a vision of what can be, concomitant with a recognition of what prevents that vision from being a reality.

Consistent conflict norms and taboos emerged from the participants, no matter whether they were "younger" (profession, 1985) in the cultural organization, "older" (profession, 1923) or "inbetween". The most salient of these were the following: peace at all costs, keep the peace, don't rock the boat, don't ruffle feathers, authority knows best, obey authority, right or wrong, authority has the last word.

Purposeful sampling in qualitative research is not intended for generalization to a total population, yet I think it is significant to note the similarity and consistency in the norms and taboos given by the 21 interviewees, coming from different national cultures and ranging in age from early 30s to mid 80s. My assumption that the norms and taboos of the younger interviewees would reflect more the renewal of religious life since Vatican Council II was not correct; they were essentially the same throughout. Such norms and taboos appear to have pervaded many aspects of conflict in the CND lived reality of the research participants.

Conflict Summary and Conclusions

Before proceeding to the summary and conclusions regarding conflict, I want to emphasize that the conflicts which the participants shared in this study were, from their reports, ones that were major in their experiences as CNDs, but ones that could have occurred early or late in their religious lives. Depending on the year of profession of a particular interviewee, a conflict she recounted herein, could have occurred anywhere from five (profession, 1985) to sixty-seven (profession, 1923) years ago. In that interim, changes have occurred both within the person herself and also within the community. These realities were noted, first, when people spoke of how they handle conflict today in contrast to the experience recounted, and second, when they spoke of the changes within CND, particularly since Vatican II.

This fact is mentioned here not to deny or lessen how CND conflict norms and taboos have permeated all initial and ongoing formation of the participants in that time span but to help contextualize the stories recounted. Having only excerpts from the interviews specific to a particular theme decontextualizes them from the interviewees' total stories in which the "then" and the "now" are there for comparison purposes.

Although specific conclusions are detailed later in this chapter, pertinent conclusions regarding

interpersonal conflict within the CND, are contextualized within a summary of the major points which emerged from the data including attitudes toward conflict, types of interpersonal conflict, the handling of conflict, the meaning of conflict and the effects of handling or not handling conflict.

Attitudes Toward Conflict

For most people, conflict is something negative and therefore something to be avoided. Only a modicum of people in this research were readily able to see that conflict in and of itself, is neither positive nor negative; it just is. A few were able to define it as something normal, natural, inevitable and growth producing, if handled overtly. Attitudes toward conflict come from a variety of sources, including one's familial, social, cultural, and religious affiliations.

The participants in this research by and large, had great difficulty spontaneously attributing anything positive to conflict. The familial, social, cultural and religious training of most, viewed conflict as negative and something to be avoided. The CND norms and taboos regarding conflict with the additional religious life norm of be ye perfect... now! exacerbated attitudes toward conflict within the cultural organization of the CND as portrayed by the research participants.

The CNDs in this research demonstrated a range of attitudes toward conflict, ranging from denial to ambivalence to its acceptance as normal and natural. From the data, it appeared that approximately two participants denied conflict, 10 had ambivalence toward it and 9 accepted it or were working on accepting it in their lives, as illustrated by their efforts at handling it more overtly.

Total denial of conflict, often referred to as repression of conflict, was difficult to ascertain because when this occurs, then it would probably not be mentioned at all. Of the two who spoke about denying conflict, in the sense of not having "real" conflict in their lives, one appeared to be a very even tempered and amenable person which could account for her seeing minimal conflict in her life. The second person spoke about difficulties with people in CND, but concluded these were not conflict in CND because the community wouldn't do such things to her.

The ten research participants who demonstrated ambivalence toward conflict reported that even when they handled a conflict situation they still saw themselves as not knowing how to handle conflict and wishing it would not occur in their lives.

The nine participants who are attempting to handle conflict more overtly are becoming more aware and

accepting of the growth potential of conflict in their lives. They reported beginning to name what they perceive as CND conflict norms and taboos and they are coming to grips with the effects of these on their lives through personal therapy, counselling or spiritual direction.

Therapy a Taboo in the CND. Two things are important to note here. First, seven of the nine participants who showed more accepting attitudes toward conflict, reported receiving personal therapy, or counseling around such issues, and five of the seven who showed ambivalence reported receiving therapy or counseling.

As mentioned earlier, I think an important CND cultural organization taboo surfaced in these discussions and that is the strong taboo and stigma related to being in therapy or counseling.

Because this is such a strong taboo, then there is the added secrecy about telling anybody that you are in therapy or counseling. As a result, many CNDs who decide to enter therapy do so then, in secrecy. Such secrecy precludes any amount of real sharing of this process except with a few friends. As inevitably happens in organizations, such information eventually "leaks out" to the point that it is the worst of the best kept secrets in such organizations! People in therapy then, usually have

a stigma attached to them as being inadequate or having "real problems".

I reiterate this taboo here to point out that many people are in therapy or counseling to deal with repressed and or suppressed emotions and conflicts in their lives. It is important to note that a cultural organization's norms and taboos around such issues can and do affect the dealing with such issues.

Second, many of the women who are working at learning more accepting attitudes toward (and handling of) conflict still don't see themselves as doing so. It seemed that many of the participants in this study have trouble with conflict, perhaps accepting to different degrees, the organization's norms and taboos of peace at all costs, don't ruffle feathers, don't rock the boat. I am not suggesting that these interviewees were inculcated with such norms and taboos only upon joining the CND. In a number of instances, family norms and taboos regarding conflict were quite comparable and so such attitudes were brought into the CND. What I am suggesting however, is that within an organization where there is the goal of perfection, both communally and individually, such norms and taboos can be exaggerated and taken to extremes.

Types of Interpersonal Conflict

The conflicts shared by the interviewees were divided

into two main categories: dyadic and group conflicts. Within these two main categories, there were dyadic peer conflicts and dyadic authority conflicts reported in the data. Also reported in the data were three examples of individual-group conflicts where individuals confronted the group and one example of group-individual conflict where the group confronted an individual.

Although there are several ways in which conflict can be handled, two ways in particular, seemed to be present in the conflict data here: confrontation and avoidance. In addition, avoidance appeared in a number of aspects, including avoidance as passive aggressiveness, avoidance as cynicism, avoidance resulting in explosion, avoidance as protection and avoidance as preparation for future confrontation.

Peer and Authority Conflicts. I found time and time again that the stories shared about peer conflicts, although difficult, were more readily handled than those with authority, because with authority, there appeared to be the added pressure of the norms, authority knows best and obey authority, right or wrong.

Although the role of authority has changed somewhat in the last number of years, still I found many of the interviewees reflecting on the cruelty of superiors especially in the abuse of their authority, where it was

"power over" rather than "power with". Therefore, most of the examples recounted of conflict involving authority were major crises in the interviewees' lives and ones they have not forgotten. For this reason, a fair number of these occurred in the data.

A number of participants avoided direct confrontation with authority, accepting the norm that authority knows best, right or wrong. By and large, these women found it difficult to challenge the system and any time they did, they reported experiencing significant guilt for not being "the good religious".

One has to question whether this unnecessary guilt comes out of a system whose hierarchical structures have fostered dependency and pleasing authority. Even though women joining the organization had to be able to make mature decisions to take on such a life commitment, yet once they were within the organization, participants shared that their training fostered a dependency on the "mother superior" and the values and norms which are integral to such a hierarchical model. Although Vatican Council II and its ensuing renewal of religious life, have attempted to change such structures, yet it would appear, from the participants' reports that many of these have been only cosmetic.

Despite all this, there were examples of participants who did confront authority, sharing that when they did so,

it became obvious in such encounters that they were seen as troublemakers in not conforming to the norm of authority knows best and has the last word.

For some CND interviewees, examples of conflict situations shared from their early years in the organization illustrated their conforming to the CND conflict norms and taboos, while examples from later years, illustrated more of a challenging of such norms and taboos. These interviewees were in the process of learning that un-named norms and taboos had a tremendous power over their attitudes and actions, whereas naming them helped take the mystery and undue power out of them. For some participants, naming the organization's norms and taboos helped to distinguish which ones were healthy and constructive for them and which ones were unhealthy and nonconstructive.

Meaning of Conflict

Two levels of meaning seemed to emerge from the participants' accounts of their conflicts. The first was the surface meaning related to differences in goals, needs or desires. The second was the meta meaning or the deep level meaning reflected in attitudes toward, and handling of conflict. Four types of meta meaning were noted:

- 1) CND and personal conflict norms and taboos similar;
- 2) CND and personal conflict norms and taboos different;

3) CND and family norms and taboos similar; 4) CND conflict norms and taboos today. I found it quite interesting to note that the data evidenced more examples of CND and personal conflict norms and taboos being different when discussed at this level. The ways these participants actually handled conflict however, did not necessarily reflect their personal conflict norms and taboos but rather those of the organization. This was noted in the contrasts between their actual and preferred ways of handling conflict. From these accounts, I suggest that the conflict norms and taboos of the cultural organization of the CND are stronger than the personal norms and taboos of some CNDs in the actual handling of conflicts.

Additional Themes

Four additional themes were found in the data:

1) intrapersonal conflict, 2) models of CND community, 3) sexuality, 4) lack of affirmation and the impact of this on self-esteem. Because these themes were not specifically part of the two research questions, I only highlighted them with succinct comments in Chapter IV. Two of them are focused here again as they interface the research question on conflict.

Impact on Self-Esteem. One of the recurring themes in the data was lack of affirmation in the CND. A number of the interviewees shared the impact of this on their self-esteem. In a life of communal and individual perfection, emphasis was on eliminating the negative. Some of these women may have looked to others, particularly those in authority, to affirm them and approve of them, all of which may have increased dependency. One wonders the extent to which looking for affirmation from and dependency on authority affected how "the good religious", upheld the norms and taboos of the CND?

CNDs in this research stated that the process of gaining self-esteem while recognizing at the same time, what a number of them called "brainwashing" and "garbage", produced a lot of guilt and self doubt, to the point that even those women who are now handling conflict more overtly don't see themselves as doing so. One wonders whether such approval and affirmation have to come from authority, given the hierarchical nature of the organization, before members in the organization can feel good about handling conflict more overtly?

Models of CND Community. The causes of conflict referred to in the interviewees' stories are consonant with the causes of conflict as highlighted in the

literature. What must be looked at seriously in this research however, is the constant variable of all these conflicts, that of the CND cultural organization. Because the conflicts shared herein occurred within the communal context of the cultural organization of the CND, then it seems paramount to take a look at CND organizational structures which may aggravate dealing overtly with conflict. Other variables such as personal attitudes and know-how are not dismissed as unimportant. These can only be enhanced however, in an ambiance that openly recognizes and accepts conflict.

Indeed, a constant theme which interfaced this concern was the vision by several participants of alternate models of CND community, models that would emphasize its apostolic mission, while reflecting its constitutional goal of union of minds and hearts. To date, most participants feel that the emphasis has been on its hierarchical structures and its regimen of communal practices based on a monastic model of religious life. Letter of the law observances of these daily horaria appear to be what constitute a good CND. Thus, it seemed that anything which upset this regimen was suspect to the point that open recognition, acceptance and handling of conflict was suspect and therefore repressed or suppressed.

Although any indepth treatment of alternate models of CND community that would be closer to its goals and purposes, is beyond the scope of this present research, suffice it to note here that this topic came up consistently when the participants talked about interpersonal conflict within the cultural organization of the CND.

Time and again in the data, CNDs stated that the present hierarchical communal life style, as the model for CNDs being together in community is not working for them. They insisted that other models are needed for the constructive and healthy handling of conflict. Such models must be adult models which assume an interdependency of equals, and foster accountability and mutuality rather than the present "parent" model which fosters dependency of subordinates, lack of accountability, and precludes real mutuality.

Brueggemann's thesis in The Prophetic Imagination, (1978) is applicable here. He proposes that part of the naming process of what is not working is a criticizing of what this is. Criticizing does not have to be carping. Rather, it is a communal mourning and letting go of what is no longer relevant. Only in this open criticism and ritualizing of what was, but can no longer be, is there an energizing for dreaming dreams of what might be.

I think criticizing and mourning what can no longer be tolerated in community has to be taken seriously as part of our present chaos. Indeed the time is now that we break our norm of "always having it together". Communal criticizing and communal mourning, as part of naming what is not working, are the focal bridging steps toward change. The CNDs in this research project have begun that bridging process, at least in their own lives. The next bridging step is the CND cultural organization dreaming dreams of what needs to be, in a movement from words to action.

Effects of Not Handling Conflict

The CNDs in this research incisively detailed the physical, psychological and spiritual effects for not recognizing, accepting and overtly handling conflict. Their stories recounted the pain and wasted potential in trying to avoid conflict and then deal with the ramifications of such avoidance.

Effects of Handling Conflict

A few interviewees spoke about the positive effects in their lives of overtly handling conflict. Their reports of personal growth and an increase in self-esteem were powerful but realistic. They talked about the paradoxical joy and pain in their managing of

interpersonal differences so that precious energy was not wasted denying and avoiding conflict. A couple of participants reported that conflict in their lives gave a "zip" to their lives; it kept the adrenalin flowing. Some reported learning how to handle conflict by actually handling it as it occurred. One even said handling conflict was the best preparation for handling the next conflict.

Section Two: Summary & Conclusions on Anger in CND

Introduction

Throughout the 300+ years of history as educators, women in the Congregation de Notre Dame have established a legacy of being competent professionals. The participants in this research felt that the CNDs have become known as educational experts, as head people, "sophisticated, educated, professional snobs". One asks what the downside of such a history is for the CNDs, of becoming solely head people?

It is only most recently that religious life has begun to look at spirituality as a holistic interface of theology and psychology. How has the CND responded to the challenge of the old adage that grace builds on nature?

In this section, the effects of CNDs being head people are summarized and conclusions posited from the data. The negative emotions, specifically anger, concomitant in conflicts, are reiterated. The CND anger norms and taboos, as well as the anger continuum are discussed. How anger is handled and the effects of both handling and not handling are summarized.

Negative Emotions in the CND

Emotions in the literature are divided into positive and negative emotions, with joy, peace and love being examples of the former and pain, frustration, anger and rage, examples of the latter. The five negative emotions mentioned most frequently by the 21 participants, as part of CND conflicts, were anger (21), hurt (12), frustration (10), fear (9) and pain (6).

Approximately half of the CNDs in this research spoke about the repression and suppression of negative emotions, while a few spoke about an improvement in the recognition, acceptance and expression of negative emotions.

From the data, the negative emotions norms and taboos suggested overall, that CNDs, as head people, who value always having it together, are out of touch with their feelings. As one participant suggested, negative emotions in the CND are nonlearned and nonpractised.

Anger Summary and Conclusions

Anger was the primary emotion of interest in this research because of the particular familial, social and religious norms and taboos surrounding it. It turned out to be the negative emotion that occurred most frequently as part of conflict situations. In fact, 100% of the participants spoke about it. Despite this, there appear to be strong anger norms and taboos in the CND.

CND Anger Norms and Taboos

When asked to give the "Ten Commandments" on how anger is accepted and expressed in the CND, the research participants highlighted their perceptions of how anger is viewed in the CND. They suggested that CNDs must have it together and not fall apart. CNDs fear anger because it means falling apart, not having poise. Thus, CNDs don't overtly express anger; if it is expressed at all, it is done so indirectly and in a composed manner.

CND Anger Continuum

From the data, I suggest there is a considerable amount of ambivalence among the CND study participants regarding anger because of the strong norms and taboos in the cultural organization. Many euphemisms were used to refer to anger. An anger continuum seemed to emerge from the descriptions participants gave to this emotion. Some

saw distinctions between annoyance, anger and rage, with an increase in intensity from one to the other.

Annoyance on the left side of the continuum was equated with some slight inconvenience; anger, in the center of the continuum, was associated with a particular personal or social injustice and an extreme of annoyance, whereas rage, on the far right of the continuum, was seen by some as anger out of control and by one as justifiable anger.

Expressing Anger

In the participants' descriptions of how they actually expressed their anger in conflict situations, repression and suppression seemed to emerge as the two main patterns. A number of these women stated that they would prefer to express it in more direct ways, but felt that they lacked the courage, know-how and experience, given the strong norms and taboos surrounding it in the CND. A few mentioned learning healthier ways of expressing their anger within the contexts of therapy, counseling or spiritual direction. Using these patterns within the CND however, amounted to challenging the status quo. As a result, some women reported networking outside the CND in order to grow and become affirmed in their ongoing growth in these areas.

Effects of Not Expressing and Expressing Anger

Not expressing anger in overt ways has caused or aggravated physical, psychological and spiritual problems for many CNDs, as incisively noted in their stories.

I think the wide range of devastating effects these CNDs reported regarding non-expression or inappropriate expression of anger in their lives is quite significant. One has to ask the question of whether it is more acceptable to be physically or psychologically sick in CND than to be angry.

The positive effects of constructively expressing anger were mentioned by very few of the interviewees, interviewees who reported receiving help with such issues in therapy, counseling or spiritual direction. In their more overt expression of anger, these interviewees spoke about an improved self-esteem and an ongoing ability to use the energy and passion of anger for constructive purposes.

Having summarized the research findings related to the two research questions, I now highlight the significance of the study.

Significance of the Study

In Chapter I, three areas of significance were specified for this study. These are reiterated in the light of the research findings.

First, this study is an initial effort to redress the lacuna in the literature related to conflict and anger in women religious. The different themes, patterns and categories which emerged from the data can be used as reference points for future research.

Second, personal and communal knowledge were hopefully accomplished for the research participants in naming what they experienced as the CND conflict and anger norms and taboos, and comparing these with their own conflict norms and taboos. In addition, reflecting on conflict and anger attitudes, as well as actual and preferred handling patterns provided additional opportunities for self and communal knowledge and affirmation. Naming norms and taboos can help take some of the mystery and power out of them. This was a focal point of the research.

Third, there can be potential application of these research findings to other groups, particular religious groups, which have the characteristics of a cultural organization. Although the specific conflict and anger norms and taboos and their effects on how group members handle conflict and express anger may not be totally applicable, yet other organizations can appreciate from this research the fact that all cultural organizations have norms and taboos. Un-named, they can have significant power over the members' attitudes and

behaviors. As such, this research can be an incentive for other groups and organizations to take steps to know who they are as an organization, and the effects of this identity, with its values, norms and taboos on their members.

Conclusions and Questions

What conclusions can one draw from this qualitative research in which a number of CND women religious were asked to describe and give meaning to experiences of interpersonal conflict and the concomitant emotions experienced in those conflicts, particularly anger? Based on the analysis of each of the research questions, I submit the following conclusions and pose a number of questions.

1) Displaying the characteristics of a cultural organization, the Congregation de Notre Dame in this research represents a cultural organization which has strong conflict and anger norms and taboos. Although the participants in this research came from the lived realities of three cultures within the Americas and different experiences at all levels of the CND, yet there was significant agreement in their stories that these norms and taboos have impeded their overt handling of conflict and expression of anger.

One wonders what further research in the CND would reveal? Are these conflict and anger norms and taboos specific to this group or are they more pervasive in the congregation?

2) The data highlighted a number of norms which particularly exacerbated any overt handling of conflict and expression of anger: authority knows best, obey authority right or wrong and authority has the last word. Although some CND documents since Vatican Council II speak about collaboration and mutuality, the hierarchical structures which are simultaneously in operation make this difficult.

Given the hierarchical structures in the CND, is it surprising that these norms and taboos would be so powerful? As detailed in the examples of authority conflicts, a number of CNDs avoided direct confrontation with authority because of these norms and what the interviewees felt was abuse of authority. Those who confronted authority felt that in challenging the system, they were unduly marked as troublemakers.

3) As detailed by the participants, the pervasive physical, psychological and spiritual effects of CNDs not handling conflict and expressing anger are serious. Two questions arise.

First, one has to ask the question of whether the CNDs in this research felt it was more acceptable for them to become physically, psychologically or spiritually sick than to overtly engage in conflict and express anger, thus challenging the status quo?

Second, what is needed for such CNDs, personally and communally, in order for them to openly handle conflict and express anger within a cultural organization that has strong conflict and anger norms and taboos?

4) In this research, the participants were asked to share experiences of interpersonal conflict within the CND. As they shared their stories, many of them spoke about how the present structures of CND community life exacerbated many of their conflicts.

One asks what models of CND community would be more amenable to overt handling of conflict? A number of the participants suggested characteristics of such models of CND community.

5) Some CNDs spoke of the strong taboo in the CND regarding sexuality. Contextualized within the second research question of expressing emotions, the CNDs who spoke about sexuality stated that they thought it was both repressed and suppressed in the CND. They saw this emotion as a vital part of who CND women are, yet they

didn't think it was dealt with in any adequate way, preparatory to taking and living a vow of celibacy.

What are the implications for present and future membership regarding the concerns of these participants surrounding what they perceive as a strong taboo in the CND regarding dealing with one's sexuality?

Recommendation

Following the conclusions and questions drawn from the research and highlighted above, one recommendation is suggested. I am recommending that the Congregation de Notre Dame consider extending this research to the other national cultures within the international organization to determine what conflict and anger norms and taboos emerge in order to compare these with the ones found herein. Only then can generalizations and recommendations be made to the total CND. At present, with this qualitative research and purposeful sampling, conclusions can only be made to the sample and not the total population of the CND.

As a cultural organization, the CND as portrayed in this research, has strong conflict and anger norms and taboos. For the most part, these norms and taboos, as researched herein, are not consciously named and handled. In their being unnamed, such norms and taboos retain sufficient power to the point of apparently superceding

differences among the national cultures in this sample. The CND conflict and anger norms and taboos were essentially the same as shared by participants from three cultures of the Americas.

Indeed, it would be insightful to extend this research in the CND beyond its present parameters to encompass its international boundaries. In so doing, one could determine the universality of the CND culture. Would the CND culture continue to supercede the national cultures as evident in this research? If this were the case, then what would be the implications for initial and ongoing formation?

The title of this research, Conflict and Anger in Women Religious, underscores my concerns about these issues for women religious generally, and women religious of the CND specifically, the cultural organization of which I am a member.

Peroration

We begin where we end is the theme that is running through my head as I conclude this research. In another context, Walter Brueggemann (1978) speaks of criticizing and energizing as the twofold task necessary for any change.

Because of my love for the Congregation de Notre Dame and because of my choosing to live out my faith call

within its structures, I want such a cultural organization to be as life giving and healthy a context as is possible for me and others to carry out its founding goals.

Within the field of organization development, I deliberately chose to do research in the cultural organization of which I'm a member rather than any other organization. I weighed the pros and cons of conducting research, where as an insider, I would have to make unfamiliar the very familiar. I had to be very upfront with my own assumptions going into this research so that I could separate them from the lived experiences and consequent perceptions of the research participants. Given my assumptions regarding the conflict and anger norms and taboos in the CND, I had to steel myself for the varied kinds of CND reactions and responses to my invitations to participate in this research. There was a part of me that wanted to go out and invite people whom I knew would have no problems participating. I resisted that temptation; I simply invited people and waited...

For any change to take place there has to be a critical evaluation of what is not working. Part of such a critical evaluation is naming what is oppressive, inadequate and no longer lifegiving. I think this has been done here. The CNDs in this research have risked to name their un-named norms and taboos on conflict and anger. In so doing, they have regained, at least for

themselves, and hopefully for the larger CND, some of the energy and power such naming can provide.

To effect any real change is an intuitive process of dreaming dreams of what could be in a group. It taps into creative energies which logical debate and analysis stultify. Such a process involves risks especially for "head" people who have been trained to debate, analyze and disparage anything other than the facts.

I think this change process is essential for the CND. How this can be done has to come from empowering women religious to name and evaluate what is oppressive in their cultural organizations. Such change favors dreaming dreams together in an atmosphere of mutuality and collaboration of how it could be different. The risks involved are well worth taking, as exemplified by the research participants herein, who have done this in their own lives. They have reported of being enabled to use their best energies for the people of God. They are passionate in their beliefs and convictions to eliminate all forms of oppression within and without.

EPILOGUE

The summer of 1990 was the occasion for a General Chapter in the CND, a time for determining the goals and objectives for the next six years and electing the leadership team which will facilitate the implementing of such goals and objectives.

As a delegate to these meetings of the international CND, I had the occasion to meet and talk with many of our CNDs from other cultures and countries. In such exchanges I shared with some of them that I was doing research on conflict and anger within the cultural organization of the CND.

What happened as a result of this was unexpected and quite exciting! Word got around that I had a copy of my research with me. Several people approached me requesting to read the manuscript. In sum, approximately 15 CNDs read the manuscript, including one English Canadian CND living in Japan, three CNDs living in Central America, two of whom are US CNDs, the other, a French speaking Canadian. The others were English speaking CNDs from North America.

Their comments about the research were quite incisive and quite similar. The overall reaction was one of confirmation of the CND reality the research participants had portrayed. A number of these CNDs reported feeling

almost physically sick reading the details of conflict and anger in the CND. In sum, their comments suggested that this iterative slice of data may have broader generalizations to the CND than just to the sample involved. It is hoped that the recommendation of extending this research to the total CND can corroborate this in order that the appropriate steps for change can be taken.

APPENDIX A

WRITTEN CONSENT FORM

I. I am Janet Malone, s sister of the Congregation de Notre Dame of Montreal. Presently, I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. I am doing research on how women religious of the Congregation de Notre Dame describe and give meaning to their experiences of conflict and the concomitant emotions that are part of conflictual situations.

II. I am asking you to be a participant in this study. I will conduct one indepth interview with you of approximately 60-90 minutes. I will contact you personally or by telephone shortly after the interview for any pertinent clarification or closure specific to the interview. I will autiotape the interview, a copy of which you may want to make for your own reflection. The tapes will be transcribed for study purposes. All information from the interview and transcriptions will be confidential. You are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation in the study at any time.

III. The materials from your interview will be used primarily for my dissertation, but may also be used for workshops, conferences and written publications. In all

written materials and oral presentations every effort will be made to preserve your confidentiality and anonymity.

Pseudonyms will be used for all names of persons and

places. IV. In signing this consent form you are agreeing to the use of the materials from your interview as indicated in Section III. If I expect to use the materials from your interview in any way not consistent with what has been agreed upon in Section III, then I will contact you to explain and request your further consent.

V. In signing this form, you are assuring me you will make no financial claims on me for the use of the material in your interview. Although there is no risk of physical, emotional, or mental injury from participating in this interview, the guidelines of the University of Massachusetts specify that no medical treatment will be required by you from the University, should any physical injury result from your participating in this project.

I, _____,
have read this statement carefully and thoroughly and agree to be interviewed under all the conditions stated above.

_____ Signature of participant

_____ Date

_____ Signature of interviewer

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

OPENING

1. When we first met, I shared with you that I am doing research in two areas: 1) how women religious within the CND describe and make sense of their experiences of conflict, and 2) how they describe and make sense of the emotions they experience in these conflictual situations.

2. I would like to explore these areas with you.

3. The written consent form (Appendix A) that you have already read and signed states that I will be using the interview information primarily in my dissertation, as well as in other published materials and workshops.

Before we begin, then, I would like to re-emphasize that every precaution will be taken to ensure your confidentiality and anonymity.

4. I have here an autobiographical information sheet (Appendix C) which I would like you to complete after the interview. You can return it to me before I leave.

Again, every effort will be made to keep the information anonymous and confidential. It will help me understand the story you share within the context of your total life experience.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

A. Introduction

1. Tell me something about what your life is like right now in the CND.

B. Description of Conflictual Situations

1. DESCRIPTION: Describe a situation in community when you experienced interpersonal conflict.
2. BEHAVIORS: Describe your behavior and others' behavior.
3. THOUGHTS: Recall what you were saying to yourself in the situation.
4. PATTERN: What do you usually do when you experience such conflict?

C. Meaning

1. Tell me what you like about how you handled the situation.
2. Is there anything you'd like to change in how you handled it? If so, what would you do differently?
3. How might you have responded in a similar situation as a young child at home? As an adolescent? As a young professional in the CND?
4. If you were in that situation today, how would you handle it?
5. Are there things about the CND that help/hinder you in your handling of conflictual situations? OR What would the

Ten Commandments of the CND be regarding your experiencing and handling of conflict?

6. Describe how you think about yourself when you reflect on how you usually handle conflict?

D. Emotions Experienced in Conflictual Situations

(In the section on emotions, if the interviewee does not mention anger, I will probe for it.)

1. AWARENESS: Recall what emotions you were feeling in the conflictual situation. (What about anger?)

2. EXPRESSION: How did you express these emotions?

3. PATTERN: What emotions do you usually experience in such situations? How do you usually express them?

(ADDENDUM question as a result of the informal pilot study) How does anger (conflict) turned inward express itself in your body? How does it affect you?

E. Meaning

1. Tell me what you liked about how you expressed your emotions (anger) in the conflictual situation described.

2. Is there anything you'd like to change in how you expressed your emotions (anger)? If so, what would you do differently?

3. How might you have expressed such emotions as a young child at home? As an adolescent? As a young professed in the CND?
4. If you were in that situation today, how would you express your emotions (anger)?
5. Are there things about the CND that help/hinder you express your emotions? OR What would the Ten Commandments of the CND be reagarding the expression of emotions (anger)?
6. Describe how you think about yourself when you reflect on how you usually express your emotions, particularly anger?

F. Conclusion

1. Is there anything you would like to add or clarify before we finish this interview?
2. Is there any question I could have asked that would have haelped you better describe and give meaning to your experiences of conflict and anger?
3. Are there any questions you'd like to suggest I delete?
4. The growth experiences you have shared with me in this interview are indeed sacred, crystallized in how you have personally recounted them and given meaning to them. If you would like a copy of this audiotape for your personal reflection, we could make arrangements to do that.

5. I want to thank you for participating in this interview. I so appreciate your taking the time to share with me. I also am humbled by your frankness and openness on such issues.

APPENDIX C

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Please write in or check off the appropriate response.

All information is confidential. THANK YOU!

PRESENT DATE: _____

1. NAME: _____

2. DATE OF BIRTH: _____ PRESENT AGE: _____

3. PLACE OF BIRTH: _____

4. YEAR YOU ENTERED THE CND: _____ AGE: _____

5. PLACE(S) OF POSTULANCY & NOVITIATE: _____

6. EDUCATION PRIOR TO ENTERING THE CND: _____

7. PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE PRIOR TO ENTERING THE CND:

(GIVE THE TYPES OF EXPERIENCE & THE NUMBER OF YEARS IN
EACH).

8. PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AFTER ENTERING THE CND: (GIVE

THE TYPES OF EXPERIENCE AND THE NUMBER OF YEARS IN
EACH).

9. DESCRIBE ANY CND LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES YOU'VE HAD.

10. HAS VATICAN COUNCIL II AFFECTED YOU AS A CND?

ELABORATE.

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